

## Fur-trade on the upper lakes, 1778-1815.

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### Fur-Trade on the Upper Lakes 1778–1815

John Askin

#### 1778: SUPPLIES RECEIVED AND FORWARDED

[Letters of John Askin to fur-traders at Montreal and Detroit, and on Lake Superior.<sup>41</sup> Original MS. letter-book in library of Clarence M. Burton, Detroit.]

<sup>41</sup> The business of forwarding supplies of provisions and liquors to the traders in the Northwest had its headquarters at Michilimackinac, and at this time (1778) was largely in the hands of John Askin. Provisions in Indian corn, bears' tallow, etc., were picked up around the lakes, while the liquors came up from Montreal by two routes: that of the Ottawa (Grand River), and that of Niagara and Detroit. The former was more expensive, because light boats had to be used, on account of the many portages; the latter more uncertain, especially in times of war.

The following letters from John Askin's letter-book, which now rests in the Burton Library, Detroit, reveal the names of traders engaged in the traffic, the predominance of the North West Company, and the difficulties of the business; they also incidently throw much light on conditions along the upper lakes during the Revolution, the state of shipping, and the interference with trade due to the progress of the war.

For a brief sketch of John Askin see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 309, note 29. To that should be added the information that he came West soon after the treaty of Paris (1763); that his wife was Archange Barthe of Detroit; and that after the transfer of the posts to the United States in 1796, he elected to remain a British subject, and removed to the Canadian side

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of Detroit River, where he died in 1817. His relations with the early traders continued friendly throughout their lives; and among his papers (in the Burton Library) are many letters from Isaac Todd, Alexander Henry, the McGills, and other founders of the Canadian fur-trade.— Ed.

By courtesy of Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Company

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Michilimackinac , April 28th, 1778.

*Messrs. M c Gill, Frobisher, and Patterson at Montreal .42*

42 For a brief biographical notice of James McGill see *Ibid.*, p. 326.

This was Benjamin Frobisher. The three brothers of that name, Thomas, Joseph, and Benjamin, were among the earliest British graders in the Northwest. Benjamin appears to have been the youngest, and to have entered the fur-trade as early as 1766. Joseph and Thomas were the original founders of the firm of Frobisher Brothers, but Thomas retired about 1778, and Benjamin succeeded him. Joseph and Benjamin were very active in the formation and conduct of the North West Company, acting as their chief agents in Montreal. Benjamin died before the reorganization of 1790. The Benjamin Frobisher who met a tragic death in 1819 during the struggles of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies was a nephew of the elder Benjamin.

Charles Patterson was likewise one of the early traders. He was with the Frobishers in the Northwest by 1775, and being one of the founders of the North West Company was active in its management. In 1788 he and his entire crew were drowned in Lake Michigan, some sixty miles from Mackinac, at a place since known as Patterson's Point.— Ed.

I take this opportunity to acquaint you that I'm taking every precaution and hope to prevent your meeting with any disappointment in what I'm to furnish you. As I found that

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no part of the great quantity of Liquors which I had on the Road arrived, I attempted to purchase some at Detroit, but the Price being far from 26s to 30s N. Y. Curr y : the Gallon and little certainty of getting it here, made me drop the Scheme. I'm to have 80 kegs of W[est] I[ndia] Rum of 8 G s. each from Mons. Barth,<sup>43</sup> at 150 lvs. the Keg, this with about 100 Bushells of hulled Corn, shall go off very early for the Portage. Corn in all probability will be as hard to be got as Rum. I'm informed from Detroit that it will cost 26s. the Bushell Unhulled

<sup>43</sup> Jean Baptiste Barthe, son of Charles, one of the early colonists of Detroit, was born at that city in 1753. He was a brother-in-law of John Askin, and at this time employed in the shipping business with headquarters at Sault Ste. Marie. After some difficulty with British officers, he left the Sault and in 1782 was settled at Mackinac. Later he returned to Detroit, and in 1796 elected to remain a British subject; whereupon he removed to Upper Canada, which he made his home during his last years.— Ed.

236 & without Bags, but that's not the worst, how to get it here now the Vessels are stopt, the Kings Vessel will come as usual perhaps, but besides King's Stores, she has to carry for so many persons, that each can have very little on the Board, I myself could [fill] her twice. from all this you may judge, how difficult it is to fullfill contracts, however don't be discouraged if money or Industry will answer, you shall not be disapointed. Rum I expect for a Certainty by the Grand River & and I shall send a Vessell to Millwakee in search of Corn. I have 150 Bushells already there & hope for more. I have about 200 here & I shall send a Batteau to Detroit that will bring me at least 120 Bushells this with my chance in the Vessells, I hope will answer my demands, my principle motive for giving you this information was, least the public Report of a Scanty [supply] might make you uneasy. I'm well provided with all the necessary Voytures to pass your effects from hence to the Portage<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> "Voiture" was the French-Canadian term for any vehicle of transportation; here, it evidently includes both canoes and small sailing vessels. The Portage referred to is Grand

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Portage, headquarters for the traders of the Northwest interior. For a description see *ante*, p. 169, note 31.— Ed.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , May 8th, 1778.

*Gentlemen of the N. W. Co. at Montreal* .45

45 Askin here refers to the company formed this year (1778), which was the precursor of the North West Company. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 314, note 39; and *ante*, p. 163, note 20.— Ed.

I wrote you the latter end of last month, since which Lieut Bennett<sup>46</sup> with Messrs M c Beath & Rankin<sup>47</sup> are arrived here in

46 For Lieut. Thomas Bennett see *Id.*, xviii, p. 375, note 4.— Ed.

47 George McBeath was a prominent Mackinac trader, being one of those who formed the sixteen-share company of 1780. In 1782, being employed by Governor Sinclair to supply provisions for the post, he became involved in financial difficulties. Capt. Daniel Robertson, however, continued him in government employ, and in 1783 sent him to restrain the Western Indians from further hostilities and from coming to Mackinac. He held at Prairie du Chien a great council, whose effects were beneficial. See documents in *Id.*, xi, pp. 165–174. McBeath continued in government employ until 1785, when he left Canada.

David Rankin was a Mackinac merchant who had connections with Detroit. In 1781 he was a witness to the deed for the purchase of Mackinac Island.— Ed.

237 Boats, they say that we cannot expect any Vessells from Detroit before news gets from Montreal there, but what concerns you & me much more is, a Report that perhaps neither Flour, Corn or Rum will be suffered to come from that Post to this, this Season. (I mean for People in Trade) its certain that those who left Detroit this Spring were not

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suffered to bring but a very small quantity nor could they get a positive answer whether or not these articles would be Suffered to come at all or not.

I have applied to Major De Peyster who will make known to Governor Hamilton<sup>48</sup> the bad consequences of laying an Imbargo on Provisions & without which it is impossible that trade can be Supported. You may depend on everything that's possible being done to prevent Disappointments. when the Vessel arrives, I will be able to write you with more certainty, therefore this warning is only to yourselves.

<sup>48</sup> For De Peyster and Hamilton, governors respectively of Michilimackinac and Detroit, see *Id.*, xviii, pp. 344, 371.— Ed.

I send off the first of your things for the Portage in three days Consisting of Rum, Corn & what's most necessary, I shall at same time write your Clark [clerk] to provide some place to receive L t. Bennett & the Troops with him, until some of Your Co. Arrives. Your Canoes are Ready.

[John Askin]

[Translated from the French.]

Michilimackinac , May 18, 1778.

[ *Mr. McDonnell* .]

Give my Compliments to Madame M c Donnell.<sup>49</sup> There is nothing new I have not written her. Send the Baggage of Mr.

<sup>49</sup> McDonnell was clerk and forwarding agent for Askin at Sault Ste. Marie. We have not been able to identify him; although he may have been the John McDonnell who was clerk (1793–95), and later (1796) partner, of the North West Company, whose journal is published by Masson, *Bourgeois*, i, pp. 267–295.— Ed.

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238 howard to Mr. Charles Boyez.<sup>50</sup> I ought to furnish for Mr. henrie 20 sacks or minots of large corn [gros Blé] 20 minots of lyed corn and 2 Hundred weight of flour. I will put these articles in the Vessel if there is time, if not they will go at another time. However if any one asks you in Mr. henrie's name for these articles before I can send them, have the kindness to give him this amount from your own stores. We must try to find a man to go in Pomp's place after the first voyage. I cannot get on without him. I have no one at present among all my men, one of whom is ill. You will deliver the goods of Mr. Henrie to Mr. Cadott<sup>51</sup> and take a receipt. You will find perhaps some articles in your account very dear. I assure you that everything is scarce & dear here and that it cannot be otherwise, and I reckon that the price will increase instead of diminishing.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Howard was one of the first traders under the British regime, being in the firm with Bostwick as early as 1763. He had large connections in Montreal, and was suspected of sympathy with the American cause, although active in repelling the invasion of 1775. He aided American prisoners to escape from Montreal, and in 1779 was arrested for going to trade in the Upper Country without a license. In 1781 he complained to the authorities that his interests suffered from his not being allowed to visit Mackinac, whereupon he received a permit to adjust his affairs the following year. He is known to have been trading as late as 1790, for John Sayer was his representative at that time on Lake Superior.

Charles Boyer would seem to have been one of Alexander Henry's clerks. In 1780 he was with a trader named Bruce on the Assiniboine River, when they were attacked (in the spring of 1781) by a numerous hand of Indians, but saved the fort after an heroic defense. In 1787 Boyer went out to Peace River, where he built Fort Vermilion, near an affluent of that stream, still known as Boyer River.— Ed.

<sup>51</sup> This was the well-known trader Alexander Henry the elder, for whom see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 277. Henry was not at this time in the Northwest, having but recently returned from a voyage to England; see *post*. He was an intimate personal friend of John

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Askin, whose papers contain many of his letters. J. B. Cadotte was his partner; see *Ibid*, p. 103.— Ed.

239 Beef at Detroit is from 30 lvs to 40 lvs a pound & Pork in proportion. As the quantity of sacks with each mark is not mentioned in the account, only the number of minots, you will find the sacks containing two minors marked 2, those of one and a half 1½, and the others according to their quantity. You will find somethings on your account furnished for Boulon and La Voine last autumn; if you have not deducted these articles from their wages, do so.

[John Askin]

[Translated from the French.]

Michilimakina , May 18, 1778.

*Monsieur Beausoleille .*

Sir —I am sending off from here a Bark loaded with goods for the grand portage, there will also arrive at Saut Ste marie the Loading of the other Bark which is on Lake Superior. I send you inclosed The account of what belongs to the great Company embarked in the two Vessels; however As that which is above the Sent is much more than that which is to ascend, I have written to Mr. Barthe to divide equally between the two Barks the Baggage that each can carry, it being sure that all will arrive a long time before the Gentlemen of the Company need it. They say that the Liquor & provisions that should come from Detroit will be stopped. I assure you therefore that it will be necessary to take great care of what you already have. Both are very dear. Grain will sell here at 30 lvs to 40 lvs the minot. There are in the Vessel some things with a letter for Mr. Chaboilliez the elder.<sup>52</sup> I beg you to receive both

<sup>52</sup> Not of the Chabollier family of Mackinac. Charles Jean Baptiste was born in 1742 at Three Rivers, son of François Chabollier. He began his career in the Northwest at an early age, and was one of the few French-Canadians who became a partner in the North

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West Company. For several years he had a fort at Pembina; but finding (1796) that his post was in United States territory, he destroyed it, and built farther north. In 1804 he was head of the Assiniboine district, and planned the expedition to the Missouri which encountered Lewis and Clark among the Mandan. In 1805 he retired, and died four years later at Terrebonne.— Ed.

240 for him and keep them until he arrives, as there is no one at Grand Portage in his interest. You will have an officer and several soldiers to pass the summer at Grand portage. I beg you to try and have a house ready to receive them so that it may be let to them. The place must have a Chimney. You will have the goodness to have 200 pickets forty feet long made by your men and erected as a barrier between the old fort and yours. It will be the great Company's duty to furnish a dwelling for the officer and his soldiers. What I have taken the liberty to suggest to you, On the subject will be approved by them I am very sure.

I need two pretty Slave girls from 9 to 16 years old. Have the goodness to ask the Gentlemen to procure two for me.

I am &ca.

[John Askin]

By Mr. M c Donald

Michilimackinac , May 28, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

The foregoing is the copy of a Letter I wrote you by the way of the lakes the 8th Instant, I forgot to mention that there was inclosed in it a small memord. for some things & affidavids about the Martens that were missing last year. I here inclose you the Copy of the Memord. but not the Copies of the Affidavids, nor bill of sale of the Land, I hope the Originals will



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not miscarry, you have with this a Copy of my letter dated the 28th of April last which left this with my other Dated the 8th of May. Your Acct Currt with me I here inclose which comprehends every acct I received of Yours before the 1st of January last, since which I have received one amounting to (£) 1023 11, 7¼ Halifax, which I have credited your new Acct with. Cap t Bannerman arrived here a few days ago in their small Vessells from Detroit with some corn & Rum for the North Trade, he had permission to bring it forward on making 241 Oath, that no part of it was for any other use. I think he says that the whole flour Allowed for the North Trade & this Post is thirteen thousand W. not half what I want alone, so that I'm almost certain there will be a Disapointment in this Article, bat as to all the others I hope not provided you send me the three Canoeloads of Rum. I have sent off two Vessell lead for the Portage of what I thought was most wanted, for those I have contracted with.

Capt. Robertson<sup>53</sup> got to Detroit in three days he was to return as soon as a Vessell arrived from Niagara, the Angelica was on the Bar on lake Sinclair on her way here, but not yet arrived, think of Maj. De Peyster's Situation with the Indians about him & not for one Shilling come for him this year, I believe five Kegs of Rum is the whole Stock of this Post, private Stores even counted, & its reported there is none on board the Angelica. Please inform the Gentlemen of the N. W. Co. what relates to them. Mons. Hypolite Chaboulliez<sup>54</sup> proposes to leave this to morrow with the Indians, you'll receive this by him

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<sup>53</sup> Samuel Robertson was from his youth bred a sailor, and in 1774 was sent to Detroit by the London firm of Phyn & Ellice to command a small vessel for some of the merchants trading to Mackinac. He sailed on Lakes Michigan and Huron until the government forbade private vessels on these lakes. He was part owner of two small vessels, besides an establishment at Sault Ste. Marie, in partnership with John Askin and Jean Baptiste Barthe. In 1779 Robertson was commissioned by the governor to voyage around Lake Michigan in search of corn, and to secure the wavering Indians of that region to British authority. For an account of that voyage, see his journal in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xi, pp. 203–

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207. The following winter he was engaged in building a wharf and several houses on Mackinac Island, preparatory to the removal of the fort thereto. Having had the misfortune to displease Governor Sinclair, he was arrested, and sent to Montreal for a trial. In 1782 he was still at Quebec, awaiting trial, soon after which he died, leaving his family resident at Niagara.— Ed.

54 For this person see *Id.*, xviii, p. 255.— Ed.

The things I ordered from London last fall I suppose will get to Montreal about the time this letter does & as some part of them cannot come by the way of the Grand River, they must  
16 242 be risked the other way, I here inclose you a Copy of that memord, the Articles that have no mark in the Margin, are to come by the grand River, those marked L by the way of the Lakes, there is others marked as per example 5 Ct. [hundred-weight] of Powder 3 by L which means that 3 Ct. of it is to come by the lakes & the remainder by the Grand River, other things in the same way—of the Barrells of Pitch & Tarr, there must be three Kegs of the former & 1 of the latter sent by the Grand River, as also of the Cordage, there must also a Coil of Inch & another Coil of half Inch Roap be made up the weight of a Peice, each of them & sent by the same way. These things I can no longer do without, I dont know how Roap is measured in Canada, but those I mean are for Running Rigging such as Halliers [halyards] &c. of small craft. In my mermord. of the 8th Instant I made a mistake ordering 2 Doz. of womans Shoes & afterwards 12 pairs for Mrs. Askins, omit the 2 Doz. the 12 pairs is Sufficient. I owe Kitty<sup>55</sup> her wedding Gown, as there was nothing here fit for it Please have one made for her the french fashion, of a light blue Sattin. I will for certain this Season send a Vessell & perhaps Establish a house at the French River to take things from thence here. I wish you could engage men to there only, provided the Vessell meet them, or so much more if obliged to come here, the agreement should be Conditional to prevent Accidents or disapointments.

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55 "Kitty" was Askin's daughter Catharine, who had recently been married to Capt. Samuel Robertson, noted above. After Robertson's demise she married Robert Hamilton of Niagara, for whom see *post*, note 74.— Ed.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 4, 1778.

*Mr. John Hay, Detroit .56*

56 Possibly this may be Maj. Jehu Hay, later lieutenant-governor of Detroit. He had a son John in the Indian trade, but in 1778 the latter was hardly old enough to be the recipient of this letter.— Ed,

The two Vessells, the first Canoes from Montreal & the Ottawa Indians going to war all arrived Yesterday, the latter is now 243 dancing at my door, my things Coming on Shore in the greatest confusion & the Angelica preparing to Sail. all this shall not deprive me of the pleasure of writing you a few lines in answer to your obliging letter by Robertson. The news is that Gen. Clinton below Albany fought and beat Gen. Gates, in which 7000 of the Enemy & their Gen. fell, before this reaches you perhaps you'll have the Acct. more fully by Niagara. great numbers of Canoes are on their way here from Montreal, Lieut. Bennett left this a few days ago for the grand Portage. I must take some other opportunity of writing you, for at present it is next to impossible. Mrs. Askin & Mrs. Robertson presents their best Compliments to Mrs. Hay.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 6, 1778.

*Mr. [Benjamin] Frobisher, Montreal .*

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I will attempt writing you by these Indians but cant say I will get through, having three Vessells to fit off now, your Canoes & my Public employment.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Askin means his duties as commissary to the garrison at Mackinac.— Ed.

St. Cir arrived last night. I have delivered him the Canoes, all your Corn, Sugar, Gum, Bark & Watap now remaining here shall be delivered him to Day, all the rum coming up in the Canoes he shall also have (I expect they will arrive today). I have this Spring got about five Barrells of Spirits up, which is now a Drawing off & shall be sent, this with 60 Kegs of W. I. Rum I borrowed of Mr. Barth is all the Liquors I can possibly muster. I dont keep two Barrells for myself. I have not had one pound of Flour this Season, Lt Governor Hamilton would not Suffer more than thirteen thousand W. to leave detroit & that only to such persons as were on the Spot, or had others to make oath that it was for the N. W. Trade. Mr. Sterling<sup>58</sup> has

<sup>58</sup> James Sterling came to America during the French and Indian War, acted as commissary during the Oswego campaign (1759), and at its close removed to Detroit. There he married Angélique Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien, and became identified with the French habitants, speaking their language and instructing their militia. He became one of the prominent merchants, but during the Revolution was suspected of sympathy with the Americans; about the time Askin is writing, he was arrested and sent to Canada for safe-keeping. It does not appear that he ever returned to Detroit.— Ed.

<sup>244</sup> fourteen thousand W. purchased for me, my Vessells is just now going to Sail in order to fetch it & and what Rum I may have arrived at Detroit, which without one moments loss of time shall be forwarded to the Portage. I'm in great hopes from what Major De Peyster has wrote Lt. Governor Hamilton with the other precautions I have taken, that not only the 14 Thousand but even more may come for me if Ready. I dare say by this time the Spring News from Canada has got to Detroit (which was not the case when the last Vessell left it) So that Governor Hamilton will now see that there is now no necessity for Stopping the provisions in that settlement. Your Canoes shall be loaded with what's here

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& at St. Mary's as nearly conformable to your orders as possible & I believe it will make about their Loading. I have sent some flour forward and will now send about a thousand W. more, so that I still hope there will not be the least disappointment. I wish Messrs. Todd & McGill had sent me by the Grand River the 1700 Gallon, they wrote me they would, I in many letters warned them not to depend on the Liquors comeing the other way, & that I had none. I know it was their great desire not to [be at] too much expences, prevented them, but I asure you nothing hurts me so as any persons being disapointed who depend on me, the not my fault. I have wrote you the most necessary [things] & must refer the rest for an other opportunity.

Your Brothers Letter from St. Mary's which you [will receive] with this will inform you further

As it's impossible for me to write any other at Montreal by this opportunity, please make my excuses to Madam Chaboullier, I will do myself the Honour to write her in a few Days, for the present please let her know, I will execute her orders for the Additional Quantity of Corn she has ordered. The Rum 245 I cannot promise untill I have fullfilled my engagements, let her know also that her Canoes was the first men here this Spring & took (with what was sent before) everything that Mons. Chaboulliez was to get, except 10 Kegs of Rum & 5 bags of Flour which shall go with the rum and Flour I'm now sending to Detroit for. I know no person so well of in the North Trade as he is.

Please excuse my not writing to Mr. McGill, also by this oppertunity, I mean make my excuse to him.

Mrs. Askin & Mrs. Robertson presents their best compliments & believe me most truly,

[ John Askin ]

P. S. St. Cir goes off tomorrow with the small Canoes & whats here & leaves two large Canoes to take my Rum thats coming by the Grand River.

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Michilimackinac , June 13, 1778.

*Messrs. Jos. Frobisher & Jno. McGill* ,59 [ *Grand Portage or Sault Ste. Marie* ].

59 Joseph Frobisher was one of the most distinguished explorers and traders of the early British forces in the Northwest. As early as 1772 he had passed beyond Lake Superior, and by 1774 penetrated to Churchill River, whence on his return (1775) he met Alexander Henry. It is said that he never again wintered in the interior, but came up to Grand Portage each year to superintend his affairs. He was one of the first founders of the North West Company, and very active in its management. In 1798 he retired, having made a considerable fortune, and thereafter lived at Montreal, occupied in civic service and hospitality.

John McGill was embarked with his brother James in the fur-trade. He died at Montreal, December 1, 1797, aged fifty-one years.— Ed.

As I'm informed that you two have to transact the business of the N. W. Co. this Season, I take this oppertunity of Mr. McBeth to inform you that by letter I Received from Montreal to day, I'm asured that there is on the way for me about 150 Kegs of Rum & Spirits all which quantity or more if it arrives you shall have by the two Canoes St Cir left for the purpose, 246 or what part of it they may not be able to take with them shall go by the first Vessell, the Grease your Mr. Jo. Forbisher ordered shall also go by the Canoes & if in my power I will furnish the additional quantity of Rum he wrote me about, however it will first be necessary to send what I have already engaged to find you. I hope the return of my Vessells from Detroit will put it in my power to send you the remainder of your Rum & Flour. My Liquors that's comeing up this [month] I'm informed was to leave Deer Island the 10th of last Month' in a Vessell that was ready to take them on Board, I imagine that you got by the first trip of the Vessells, all that was forwarded to you, except what your own Canoes took, for the I mean to serve others, yet my intention is by all means that you have the Preference, indeed I mean to allott one of the two small Vessells purely for your

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Services, only when you cannot lead her of course others may put on board, the other I mean for the use of such other Gentlemen as may choose to ship in her. when I have the Pleasure of seeing you here we will settle all them matters.

I have not as yet heard from your Mr. John McGill who I'm told is gone to the Saut St. Mary's some time ago, you have only 50 Bushells of Corn more to receive of me, which I was ordered to leave at the Saut for the Canoes that go down, except the 40 lately ordered. I am very [truly]

[John Askin]

Per Mr. McBeth

Michilimackinac , June 14, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

I hear Mr. Howard intends sending a Canoe for Montreal tomorrow, I will therefore write you as much as time will per mit for the present & the remainder by some other oppertunity. I have Received five letters from you this Season, dated the 21st & 28th April, the 9th, 11th, & 16th May, the two first I Received the 5th, and the three latter the 13th, Instant, I believe there is some others from you for me, but Mr. John McGill having taken them to St. Mary's with him, prevents their coming 247 by several days so soon as they otherwise would. I'm very sorry you should make yourself so unhappy about the return of my Rum last fall, I'm sure I never blemt you for it, on the Contrary I'm well persuaded when anything under your directions miscarry, the same would happen were I there in person, I do asure you I'm under many obligations to you for the pains you have taken about my things, I now have great hopes of seeing them soon & tho I may reap a great benefit by it in the sale of some of them, what pleases me most is the having it in my power to furnish the Gentlemen of the N. W. Go. the remainder of their Liquors after what I sent them & what is in my Canoes, which is not yett arrived. The very clear account you have sent

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me of the furs shipt on my account as well as my Liquors etc. in their different Situations deserves my thanks, as I see you have not spared pains to make everything very dear to me. I have already sent you all the proofs I can give about the Martens that are missing, if they do not answer they must of course be lost. I approve of your plann of sending me Rum whether ordered or not, if it can get up, I can never Suffer by having a quantity, besides I can then contract with much more Safety to myself & others. I shall not for some time be able to examine our Accounts.

I have wrote Mr. Steadman to send me Rum in lieu of what he took of mine, this will be more advantagious to me by much. You forgot inclosing the Gentlemen of Garrison Accounts as you mention, you have only noted the Sum. however, I believe this will answer for me to get payment from them, Lieut. Bennett had already desired me to charge him his, he knew and told me the amount, when I see my Canoes and hear from St. Marys, I will let you know exactly what Rum & Spirits is come for me in my own & the N. W. Canoes. I wish you had been more plain in letting me know whether they were to go to St. Mary's or come here first, as I have kept two large Canoes of the Co.'s here in order to take the Rum that is in mine. Old Francois is not yett arrived, but I expect him daily, I shall pay due attention to what you say respecting his going into the North, I'm sure he shall not with my consent & I dare say he will not 248 without. I asure you that tho' I now supply several others, besides the great Co. I have a certain inclination to forward their interest preferable to any other & tho' I would not take any unfair means to prevent Gentlemen in that concern doing well, yett no profit should induce me to undertake anything that could in the least hurt a concern where so many of my friends are interested. I'm determined never to undertake Canoes for any but them, & one Vessell shall be sole[1]y at their disposal, so far as they can make use of her. As to the supplying of others with Rum, Corn etc. after I have made sure of what will be wanted for the great Co. (as we must now term them for distinction Sake) it can be a matter of no consiquence to that concern, for if I do not do so others would. I'm therefore sure it would be rather pleasing than otherwise to my friends to hear I made money. I Received 240 lvs. from Major DePeyster for the Rum & Bisket taken



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by Mr. Ainse<sup>60</sup> from Roi, & the N. W. Co. has credit for it in their last years accounts the 28th of June. I Received from Amable Roi<sup>61</sup> & Lafevre £9:6:8 N. Y. C y . last Year which I omitted advising you of, charge me with that sum, it's all I have been able to collect, on acct. of you & and your Brother John.

60 For Joseph Ainse see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 309.— Ed.

61 Little is known of Amable Roy, an early settler of Green Bay. He was born in Montreal, came early to the Northwest, married a stepdaughter of the elder Langlade, and had a small farm at the Green Bay settlement. Having no children of their own, Roy and his wife adopted Louis Grignon, who inherited their property after their deaths, about the beginning of the nineteenth century.— Ed.

Before Lieut. Bennett left this I did what I thought was necessary in order that your Co. at the Portage should still pass for what it actually is, the most respectable as to proprietor & amount. Nous Sommes fort sur Le Dernier Gout de Londres [we are very interested in the latest London fashions], you may judge of Mrs. Askin & Mrs. Robertson by other ladys. for in certain matters women are almost all alike. I believe Capt. Robertsons Marriage will make him consent to pass some years in this Country, I have not yet talked to him on the Subject, <sup>249</sup> however had there been anything entered into on iris account, you should not have been disapointed, he has too much sentiment to suffer it, we have time to see more in these matters, he could have the Command of King's Vessell on these lakes, but it realy is not worth his acceptance nor will he take it.

I hope to hear much news from you after Mrs. Todd's Arrival from England. don't be plagueing me at this busy time with an account of my having drawn the £2000. I shall not make you any remittances until my own Canoes go down.

I believe I mentioned to you in my last that Robison is looking out for the best harbour that can be found nearest the french River & that I intend to build a Store there.

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Please pay Mr. Benj. Frobisher one hundred Livres for me.

Mrs. Askin presents her Compliments to Mrs. McGill.

Mr. Howards Canoe has Slipt off. I wait an other Oppertunity.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 15, 1778.

*Mr. Benj. Frobisher, Montreal .*

In my last dated the 6th Instant I wrote you pretty fully about everything relative to your North Concern, for the present I have only to add on that head, that I every day expect my Vessells every day with the Rum & Flour to compleat your Co's quantity which shall be forwarded with the greatest expedition, my Canoes from Montreal are not yet arrived but, I expect them to morrow, as Capt. Robertson on his way from taking a view of the french River, saw three which must be them.

Mr. John McGill has got to St. Mary's several days ago if I may judge from where Mr. Morrison<sup>62</sup> left him, but I have not

<sup>62</sup> Charles Morison was of Scotch origin and came to Mackinac to reside, about 1789. He there served as magistrate, until after the British surrender. As a merchant he trafficked to Lake Superior, but as an independent trader, not connected with the North West Company. He died in 1802 on his way to Montreal, and was buried at Niagara. See Ontario Historical Society *Papers*, vi, p. 29. See also his letters, *post.*— Ed.

250 as yet received the letters etc. he brought up for me. In all your new undertakings I wish you Equal sucess to that you have had in the North & the continuance of that also. t think it very just that the young sett should now take the same pains the old have done, it's true equal success can hardly be expected from such a change, added to the number of

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adventure[r]s being Augmented, if anything I can do here exclusive of what I'm obliged to do, can be of Service to the concern, it never shall be wanting.

This place affords no news which I can send you in return to your's, which I thank you for.

I received the hundred Livres Galliard owed you & have wrote to Messrs. Todd & McGill to pay you that sum, as we have no other account open with each other to my knowledge. I return you thanks for the Printed engagements you were so kind as to send me, they will be very serviceable & prevent some trouble. I have this clay promoted a very necessary Ordinance, which is, that no person can hire an Engagé without seeing a proper discharge from his former Master, or a Certificate from the Commanding Officer why he has none, & what strenthens this is all the Merchants having Signed it & invested the Commanding Officer with Authority to make such agressor pay 1000 lvs. without the power of afterwards sueing for it, there is something more to prevent carrying from any place persons in Debt who are not hired, the like is to take place at the Portage, so that I hope things will soon be on a better footing<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> These plans for the better regulation of voyageurs or engagés are very interesting. A number of the engagements of this period are in the Wisconsin Historical Library, and samples thereof will be given *post.*— Ed.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 17, 1778.

*Mr. John Hay, Esq., Detroit .*

As a true Irishman I want to tell you that at this present time I have nothing to say, or rather that is worth your 251 hearing, all the Spring news from Montreal you must have had. Your last canoes from Montreal left about the 16th of May, at which time there was not any Vessells Arrived from London, or any part of Europe at Quebec.

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Messrs. Langlade & Gotiez are on their way from LaBay here with above two hundred Warriors who are going down the Country.<sup>64</sup>

64 For this expedition see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, pp. 368, 369, with accompanying notes.—Ed.

Mr. Charles Morrison is with us & gives a much better Account of the Rebbels behaviour respecting what they call justice than any I have heard, as to public matters he was kept in the dark as much as if he had not been in the Country, he got Monty eight of their paper Dollars for a half Joe before he came away, judge the repute their Currency is in.

This is my buisy time, I shall therefore conclude by presenting Mrs. Hay & Family with Mrs. Askin & my Compliments I am etc.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 22nd, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

My Canoes are now arrived & have brought everything in good order & agreeable to the invoice, except in Bale N o. 7: a small white Shirt in lieu of a large one Ruffled, Bale N o : 3 wants a Shirt of Russia Sheeting, a pair of Russia Trousers & a pair of Oxhide Shoes, N o. 4 also wants a Shirt of Russia Sheeting.

The things from England are really well choose & please me much, however a fiddle which I had mentioned in that memor d . is left out, & tho' such an omition can be of no consiquence to persons who can supply the want at the next Shop, it is so different here, that I would not for ten Guineas it had not come, please purchase one for me at Montreal without fail, let the price be about £6 Hallifax, I sent you a memord. this Spring in which a

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fiddle was mentioned, that one is also to come, its for 252 an other person, please not to forget a quantity of strings with the fiddles.

I approve much of your plann of forwarding Rum as soon as you received it, no matter what Quantity if it gets on, for except I have it here before hand, I will not make any more positive contracts, the freight of what came in my Canoes will I dare say cost as much as I get for the whole Rum, but this is not what gives me the greatest uneasyness it's the fear of the N. W. Co. not receiving the whole of the Quantity in time. during these troubles I know of no other way of contracting with them, but fixing a price on what of the rum comes by the Lakes & letting them have that by the Grand River at first cost & Expences (I want no profit on it) they must allow me Commissions for purchasing their Corn, flour etc. for the Bushell of Corn this year costs me 32sh. & I furnish it for 24sh.

I received my shirts by Mr. Soloman<sup>65</sup> who arrived here in eighteen Days.

<sup>65</sup> For this trader see *Ibid.*, p. 254, note 50.— Ed.

I have no time at present to examine the Accounts, but shall as soon as more at leisure, [as] I intend sending off my Canoes in about ten days time, I cannot, there is above three hundred Warriors going down. Robertson has been detained with my Vessells untill they go off.

Mrs. Askin presents her compliments to Mrs. McGill in which I join with all my heart I am etc.

[John Askin]

Per Campau

Michilimackinac , June 23rd, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

## Library of Congress

Looking over the letters yet unanswered I find yours of the 25th. Ult o . to which I made no reply in my Yesterdays letter I'm very glad that there is so great a likelihood of my Rumm arriving so soon. I daily expect the Angelica & the Vessells I sent for the flour here, perhaps my Rum may be on board. the Tart & Kettles are not pressing articles, I can do without them 253 some time, provided the pitch gets safe here, & as to the cheese please replace it with another Hamper this Year, The Canadian Pork & loaf Sugar which you mention being Short of my order of the 18th, Sep. 1777, I can well do without, but the covering Nails & common Wine are both very Saleable articles, however as there is a large Quantity of the former of these articles comeing or come out for me, it will be needless to purchase others at Montreal. Old Francois goes for Detroit he intends living there. I shall send a Young Brother in law of mine<sup>66</sup> to take his place at Millwakee as much on acct of the Corn to be got there as the Peltry. I am under many obligations to you for the Uncommon pains you have been at in order to insure the speedy passage of my things by the Lakes. I will be attentive to what you mention respecting the time of payment of such drafts as I shall draw on You. I am in such want of Waistcoats & Breeches that I beg you will have immediately purchased for me six or eight Yards of fine white Cloth, which with sutable trimings please send me by the very first oppertunity, hardly any person will refuse to embark so small a Bundle on being paid for so doing, the kind of Buttons I would choose is plain double gilt with eyes if to be had, if not with Ivory buttons, but eyes answers best as they can be taken off when washing.

<sup>66</sup> No doubt this was Louis (called Louison) Barthe, born in 1760, and living in his latter years at Amherstburg, near Detroit. During the War of 1812–15 he was employed as interpreter, and accompanied Robert Dickson and others on the Prairie du Chien expedition (1814). It is not probable that he remained long at Milwaukee, as during the winter of 1779–80 he was assisting Samuel Robertson on the island of Mackinac.— Ed.

The want of Breeches makes me dwell so long on the Subject, in order to insure their coming I am etc.

## Library of Congress

[John Askin]

Per Campau

Michilimackinac , June 23rd, 1778.

*Mr. Alex. Henry, Montreal .*

I suppose by this time you are returned from England & of course expect to hear from your old Acquaintances.

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I sent your Corn & flour to St. Mary's agreeable to your letter to me on that Subject. I did not go to Detroit last fall as I intended when I seen you last, these troublesome times causes many disputes in which A man often gets involved, not withstanding his great desire to the contrary. I therefore thought it most prudent to stay where I'm sure to live in peace.

I'm building a new house out of the Fort and intend W make use of it untill the present warr is at an end, & then shall change my Quarters, but where to I know not as yet. Lyons wintered with us here & Bestwick<sup>67</sup> went to the Illinois, he is returned with a large Bag Diamoonds & other precious Stones. Kitty is Married to Capt. Robertson and joins with Mrs. Askins in compliments to you I am as usual

<sup>67</sup> Benjamin Lyons appears to have been in partnership with Askin, the firm being mentioned in 1780 as Askin, Lyons & Bestwick. He was at Mackinac as early as 1776 and as late as 1800. Both De Peyster and Sinclair used him in aid of the government.

For Henry Bestwick see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 235.— Ed.

[John Askin]

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Per Campau

Michilimackinac , June 29th, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

I have answered the last of your letters in two I wrote you by Mr. Campau, the 22. & 23. Instant, their Copies you shall have by this opportunity if time will permit.

Your Clerks or some other have made a very great mistake in the Tea they sent me, it is not only the most common sorts of green Tea, but so bad besides that I would prefer the Bohea to it ten to one, besides its comeing in Paper in a bale has still done it some damage by bruising it into powder. I shall send you a Sample of it which will be the best proof of its quality, Please Credit me the difference of price, it's charged 15s Hallifax. My Canoe goes to morrow, not all loaded with my own 255 Packs, as I have not yet had any from St. Mary's, I will take some for Mr. Lyons & he will take as many for me. The Strouds you now send are the worst I ever have seen, those to Mr. Lyons excepted, it hurt his trade I know & as he would be perhaps delicate about complaining, I thought proper to mention it you.

You will doubtless send me some Canoes with the part of my things that comes from England, which I have mentioned was to come by the Grand River, you may hire them for certain to come to the entrance of the lake only, as I will send People in a few days to Build there as I would choose however that all was examined it will be necessary to send an account of the contents of each Package, directed to the person acting for me there & if you could without too much trouble send the account of the Packages both in french & english, so much the Better, however, I mean to send an Englishman.

I here inclose you a list of what goods I shall want for that place for the Winter of which please send me a separate Invoice as they are for Mr. Lyons & me, half the amount of



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which to be charged to each of our account separately. In about eight days I will be able to send you some remittances in Bills etc.

No Vessell yet from Detroit, you'll be surprized when I tell you that we have not heard from Niagara this Year, so of course we got no letters that are come by the way of the lakes we have no news worth communicating. Pray dont forget the white cloth for my Breeches & the trimings. Mrs. Askin joins in Compliments to Mrs. McGill. I am etc.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , June 30th, 1778.

*Messrs. Holmes & Grant*<sup>68</sup> [*Lake Superior*] .

<sup>68</sup> William Holmes was one of the early British traders in the far Northwest. In 1776 he was in the interior with Alexander Henry and Charles Patterson; and in 1780 was, with his partner Grant, a stockholder in the North West Company. In 1790 he sold his share to John Gregory. Which one of the numerous Grants was his partner, cannot be determined. James Grant was a Montreal outfitter in 1778 and 1782; John, Charles, and William Grant were all traders to the Northwest in 1786.— Ed.

I received a letter for your Mr. Wm. Holmes this morning which I now send you, no news here of Vessells yett Arrived at 256 Quebec, there is now full liberty for Provisions to come from Detroit, owing to a large Quantity on the Road for the Crown.

The Provisions for your Canoes that go down shall be at St. Mary's in good time. I'm sorry to inform you of an Accident that happened poor James, fireing the Cannon on board he had the most part of his hand blown off, nothing but the thumb and part of the fore finger remains, I hope he may recover, but cannot say anything for certain yet. I most truely pity the poor lad. Mrs. Askin presents her Compliments, I shall conclude by wishing you much Success. I am

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[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , July 2nd, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

Mons. Thierry<sup>69</sup> goes off to day in a light Canoe well maned, which makes me think his passage will be short & you will receive this before several others I wrote you some time ago. I received Yours of the 7th. Ult o & am sorry to hear Beaver is fallen, did I know any certain price I could give for furs, I could have purchased some parcells.

<sup>69</sup> Pierre Thierry was born in Montreal in 1750. His occupation was conductor of canoes, which he brought up the Grand (Ottawa) River to Mackinac. He was frequently at the latter place, and signed the register of marriage as late as 1804.— Ed.

Tho the Vessells from Europe are long a comeing, yet I dare say nothing has happened them, its necessary they now take more precaution than formerly. Mr. Lyons suffers much by his goods not comeing, he is obliged to keep men whose provisions are now very dear, corn will not be had for 30(lvs). in a few days, added to all this had they come up in the Spring he could have Sold them to government. with this I send you the

Nahshawagaa, or The White Dog's Son Potawatomi chief. From colored lithograph by James Otto Lewis, 1827

Keeotuckkee Potawatomi chief. From colored lithograph by James Otto Lewis, 1827

257 Copy of a Letter I wrote you the 29th. Ult o. as also a memord. for some Goods for Mr. Lyons & me for the trade at the entrance of the french River, and as there is several things in this Memord. to be made up at Montreal, it cannot get to you too soon. Three Canoes loaded with furs will set off this evening, or to morrow morning.

I write the N. W. Co. by this oppertunity, I'm so hurryed that I can only add that I am etc.

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no news of Lorry yett

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , July 2nd. 1778.

*Gentlemen of the N. W. Go., Montreal .*

I wrote you formerly that I had sent a Vessell of mine to Detroit for flour & Rum for you, at her arrival Governor Hamilton did not think proper to suffer any provisions, I mean flour, to leave the Settlement, however a Vessell arriving from Niagara with some provisions & bringing an acct. that there was great quantities on the way, there was an order published that every person with permission might send what Quantity they thought proper, but this served no great purpose as my Vessell was ordered along side of the Kings & what clothing, Liquors etc. for this garrison were put on hoard her, & not only that, but merchants had permission to put things on board as well as myself. I asked the Master of, the Vessell if he represented to the Governor that the Vessell was not in the Service & therefore not subject to carry for every person, he says he did & even mentioned that after he had taken the King's things on board, he desired that he might make up the rest of the loading with mine, & that the Governor told him, I could not have any preference over others. If what he says be true, I really think it a hardship. I imagine Major DePeysters letter to Governor Hamilton explained fully his reasons for letting my Vessells go to Detroit. I dont want there should be any complaints about these matters, I only mean to show you that I or no other person in these troublesome times can assure you about Provisions, 17 258 or anything Else, all I received was four thousand of flour & 48 Kegs of Rum which I dispatched immediately for the Portage. I expert more in a few days, as it comes here I will forward it till I at last get your quantity or more. I am etc.

[John Asken]

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Michilimackinac , 2nd July, 1778.

*Richard Dobie, 70 Esq., Montreal .*

70 Richard Dobie was a well-known Montreal merchant, being in business there as early as 1763. He was, however, not among the founders of the North West Company.— Ed.

I have only time to inform you that I have received the thirty otters remaining due me. Messrs. Hippolite Chaboulliez & Co. wrote to you & as I had sent you back the note the 22nd. Ult., I gave them a Receipt which you will please take up when you deliver the note. I mentioned that the otters were not choice, since which I got good ones in their Stead, as least such as pass for good here, the Quantity I had to choose from was not great. By my Canoes that leave this to morrow you will receive the whole of the Beaver & otters made up in three Packs. Kitty is now at Detroit. Mrs. Askin joins in Compliments to Mrs. Dobie, I am with esteem etc.

[John Askin]

Michilimackinac , July 3rd, 1778.

*Messrs. Todd & McGill, Montreal .*

I here inclose you an Acct. of 42 Packs the contents of each pack separately, the amount of the whole in their supposed value amounting to 10303 Livres or ancient Shillings, the guides were present when each pack was made up & seen their contents. There is three packs also belonging to Mr. Dobie & 3 of Mr. Perinaults<sup>71</sup> the Acct. of which I send them. the Guides also were present when they were made up, as to six

<sup>71</sup> Very little is known of this trader, who is mentioned as “trading to Lake Superior,” in *Mich. Pion. and Hist. Colls.*, xx, p. 280.— Ed.

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259 for Mr. Alex. Ellis<sup>72</sup> & 54 which Mr. Lyons sends, their contents are unknown to the Guides. You have likewise inclosed the men's Acc t in so plain a manner as will not admit of any dispute, by it you'll see there is a ballance due them of 5116 lvs for remainder of wages, Equipments etc. which You'll please charge me with.

<sup>72</sup> Alexander Ellice, born at Knockleith in 1743, was a Scotch merchant of good family, who had emigrated to New York and laid the foundation of a considerable fortune. Being a Loyalist he removed at the beginning of the Revolution to Montreal, where he founded the firm of Inglis, Ellice & Co. About 1780 he returned to England as head of the London house, leaving his brother Robert as manager of the Montreal business. Alexander's son Edward became prominent in the fur-trade, effected the union of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies, and became a member of the British cabinet.— Ed.

There is one man named Couroy in your list to whom you advanced 74 lvs I can hear of no such person, or no other in his stead. You'll please receive 90 lvs from Mr. Dobie & as much from Mr. Perinault, for freight of their Packs, Mr. Lyons & McBeath, I settle with here for freight of theirs.

Since Settlement I sold the guide for 110 lvs which please deduct from what is due him.

I dont know if I before mentioned to you to charge the Gentlemens Acct. of this Garrison to me, I mean Lieutenants Bennett, Clows,<sup>73</sup> & Doctor Mitchell.<sup>74</sup> I am Dear friends etc.

<sup>73</sup> For this person see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 393.— Ed.

<sup>74</sup> Doctor Mitchell is noted in *Ibid.*, p. 496.— Ed.

[John Askin]

### 1784: SALES AT MONTREAL

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 1, p. 109.]

## Library of Congress

Montreal 11 October 1784.

Dear Sirs —We now enclose you copies of the different Sales of Furs shipped last year for your account, on which it is pleasing to remark there arrises a very handsom profit vizt

260

on those of mark (B) £794. 1. 7.

on do mark (A) 34. 6. 2d.

if purchased from M c Comb.

on do I A A 41. 19. 5.

on do I A-T. W. C. 349. 11. 3

on do I B A (Barthe) 752. 12. 3

£1972#10#8 Sterling

equal to £2191.14. 1 Currency carried to the credit of your Account. It would afford us satisfaction could we hold out to you similar hopes against another year. but we fear much for deer Skins, as the quantity going home greatly exceeds that of last year & we are sorry to remark that those from the Messrs. MaCombs<sup>75</sup> turn out a very inferior quality, nor are the Racoons of this parcle any thing so good as those of last years and to add to these untoward circumstances there is yet near to 400 packs not come down, on which we fear an additional premium of 2 per cent must be paid as there remains but small hopes of our being able to get them a board the vessells which are to sail from Quebec on the 25th. Inst.

<sup>75</sup> The Macombs, Alexander and William, were Irish born, coming while quite young to America, with their parents, and settling (1755) at Albany. About 1772 they removed to

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Detroit, where the sons became the most prominent merchants of the town, and acted as government agents during the Revolution.

Alexander married Catherine Navarre in 1773. In 1785 he removed to New York City, where on Broadway he built a palatial home, which was rented to President Washington as the first executive mansion. The son of Alexander, bearing the same name, entered the United States army and arose to eminence. The father died in 1831 at Georgetown, D.C.

William Macomb, brother and partner of Alexander, remained in Detroit, where he died in 1796, leaving three sons.— Ed.

Ever since the arrival of our Mr. Todd our time has been so much taken up with baling Furrs & providing Funds to answer the heavy drafts from above that we have not looked into the accounts he brought down & we must now deferr it until all the shipping are gone.

We have now nearly made provision to get through the business this year with the same regard to your drafts as heretofore, 261 that is, that no man can say he has ever called twice for money that was due. we think we may now flatter ourselves with things going on more smoothly in future & that we shall be more free from perplexity & anxiety than has been the case for two or three years past.

We have hitherto as you may have observed declined making any charge for our Trouble of shipping Furrs to England, tho' most certainly it creates more employment than importing Goods, nor is it our intention to make any charge on what is past, but on all future Shippments as well as on those of this year we mean to make charge of One & a half per cent, which we dare say you will think reasonable for that kind of Agency. The Merchants at home charge 2½ per ct. altho' they never see a Skin, Whilst we are obliged to do everything ourselves & we assure you it is not a small business to go properly through with. We are with much esteem, Dear Sirs your sincere Friends

Todd & M c Gill

*Messrs. John Askin & Co .*

**1786: RETURNS UNSATISFACTORY**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 167.]

Montreal 12 April 1786

Dear Askin —I must not let the first opportunity of the Spring slip over without my personal Respects & I hope they will find you well in your health & a fair prospect of plentiful Returns from the Indian Country.

The Firm having wrote you on business; leaves me nothing further to say on that head than to enjoin you by every turn of friendship to leave no stone unturned in order to make remittances, for on this Summer depends even our existance as much of Character & Credit. The very scanty payments we made last year, has left us indebted with our Friends in England, so largely that Todd writes us he was under the necessity of relinquishing every Scheme of business except the shipping a few-dry Goods & some Rum, being afraid to run further in debt 262 and perhaps even met with a refusal of further Credit. This situation I must not tell you the cause, least it should have an appearance of reproach, your own feelings will dictate what must be wise. I have no occassion to say more than that I depend confidentially on your acting in consequence. Do not suppose that, because I have been complaining for years past, the necessity is not greater than it was the cause is much altered—a bad trade here, a scarcity of money & no doubt the sum owing us from above; but why should I detain you with the exposition of affairs, knowing that you will leave nothing undone that may be in your power to accomplish. I forsee & know that very few Goods will be sent to Detroit this Season & it might have been a good year to push, but it is out of our power, therefore I advise you to husband well your dry Goods & if you order any that you may be as sparing as possible. Michilimakinac will be greatly



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overstocked, insomuch that it would not surprise me were goods sent from that Post to Detroit.

I cannot yet say anything certain to you about the price of Furrs, but I am persuaded deer skins have sold badly & I fear Bear & otter have had a tumble. I advise you strongly to change all your late fall & winter deer Skins for Racoons & Pieheux [lynx] but Foxes are really worth no more than 4sh. york a good Raccoon large size is better & two Racoons or one Picheux as they were of more value than a deer skin, except it be a good red, very short blue [?] or parchment Buck.

Your Friends of the Northwest are making a larger outfit this year than they did the last & are going to build a small vessel at the Portage.<sup>76</sup> their great success last year enables them to undertake anything & I make no doubt they will continue successful, which on some of their accounts I most sincerely wish.

<sup>76</sup> For early vessels on Lake Superior see *ante*, p. 170, note 32.— Ed.

It is generally thought that Sir Guy Carleton who is expected early to be our Governor<sup>77</sup> will permit small vessals of private property on the Lakes, should that be the case you will

<sup>77</sup> For a brief notice of Carleton see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, P. 288, note 10.— Ed.

<sup>263</sup> no doubt wish to have one, but it will be prudent to wait till his determination is known & so soon as we do know it, you shall hear from us.

I hope you will push Barthe to convert everything into Returns this Season, he says he intends it as well to pay you as us, the Balance he owes is very near to 70000 lvs Houses and lands can never produce much benefit to Merchants & it may be the properest time to sell them before the final determination of Government is known respecting the Posts. excepting a House for my business I would not wish to have any dead property in a country where for want of Courts of Justice, Tenures must be very insecure.

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Your daughter Madelion is in perfect health & when a proper opportunity offers, It is my intention to fulfil Mrs. Askin's & your wish by sending her up & I am pretty certain you will find her "bien entendue dans le menage"<sup>78</sup> insomuch that I fancy you will not keep her many years Mademoiselle. I expect Todd from England early & as there will be little to do here, he may probably pay you a visit, taking Madelion with him.

<sup>78</sup> "Well-taught in the art of housekeeping." Madeleine Askin married Dr. Robert Richardson, a surgeon of Amherstburg, Ont., who was appointed to the Indian department during the War of 1812–15. While acting as surgeon for the British, he was captured by Perry's fleet, but was later released, and in 1815 was acting as clerk of court at Sandwich. His wife died young, leaving small children, one of whom, Maj. John Richardson, afterwards became a well-known novelist and traveller.— Ed.

Mrs. M c Gill requests Mrs. Askin with your good self & Family to accept her best Complements and believe that I am, Dear Askin Your affectionate Friend

James M c Gill.

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 185. Translated from the French.]

Detroit June 30, 1786.

*Monsieur Durand*

Sir —I do not reproach you for the past, that is no use. I only say to you, that I have supported you As well as many <sup>264</sup> others, when I can scarcely support my self to day. Monsieur Vigoe<sup>79</sup> seems to be among your friends, and assures me that you will do me justice for the loss so I content myself for the present. It gives me much pain that when I could serve you, you have detached yourself from me. I hope that you will see that it will be for your interest to return and I believe that I will not have any difficulty in getting for you Merchandise from our Company. There were <sup>226</sup> of your Deer skins with several

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Bears that were so bad that I have them here yet In this regard I have done for the best, for the bad Skins have not brought enough to pay for half the expense. The 27 of Sept, 1784 I sent you your account by Mr. Vigoe amounting then to 26,279 lvs 17 s & at present it makes the sum of 2210£ 11 sh New York Currency, without interest, and all that you have sent me credited as you will see by the Account & I can assure you that I have lost wall by the Sale of your Peltries, as on those of others as I can prove. However that is not your fault. I only have to add, that I have not yet lost hope for you, and that you will have a Good Opportunity This year to recoup all that you have lost. I am Sir your Servant

79 For Vigo see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 466, note 91.— Ed.

[John Askin]

*Mr. Jean Durand*<sup>80</sup>

80 Jean Durand appears to have traded to the Illinois, where in 1780 he was sued at Cahokia. The same year he was at Mackinac, and offered to guide Langlade,s forces to the Illinois River.— Ed.

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 187.]

Montreal 16 July 1786.

Dear Sir —Since ours of the 8th July, we are favored with your letters of the 22 d & 27 ult and as our Mr. Todd will we dare say be with you when this gets to hand, it is the less necessary for us to write you at length. But we cannot help expressing much uneasiness that on the 22d of last month you were still unacquainted how, many of your Customers had made out for we have allways thought that at so advanced a time of 265 the year it was in' every bodys power to tell pretty nearly the prospect of their returns, and from your silence on that head we are really concerned.

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The Person gone off, whose name you do not mention, we suspect to be Lorimier,<sup>81</sup> should that be the Case we fear you suffer greatly by him, having recollection of your saying in a former letter that he owed you largely.

<sup>81</sup> Louis Lorimier. son of the trader Peter, was born in 1748 at La Chine, near Montreal. In 1769 the father and son came to the Western country and established their trading house on the portage between Great Miami and Maumee rivers, on the creek which has since been known as Laramie's. They acquired large influence with the Shawnee of the neighborhood, and during the Revolution acted as British agents. Either father or son accompanied the expedition that in 1778 captured Daniel Boone. In 1782 the Kentuckians raided the Miami, captured Lorimier's store, and plundered and burned the goods. The owner barely escaped with his life, and never again returned to the site, establishing instead a temporary encampment upon the Maumee. Louis Lorimier removed to Spanish territory in 1786 or 1787; it is his contemplated removal thither, to which reference is here made. He attracted to his neighborhood a considerable band of Shawnee and Delaware Indians, and in 1793 received a grant from the Spaniards at Cape Girardeau. He was likewise made captain of militia and commandant. His journal for the year 1793–94 was found among the Louisiana papers in the archives of Seville. In 1796 he revisited the United States as Spanish agent to attract still more Indians to the west of the Mississippi. He expressed great regret at the cession of Louisiana to the United States, and in 1804 entertained the retiring Spanish commandant at the "Red House," Lorimier's homestead at Cape Girardeau. In 1806 he was one of the commission to lay out the town, where in 1812 he died, leaving a large estate and several children, one of whom was educated at West Point, and entered the United States Army.— Ed.

In sending off the last boats from La Chine a few barrels of Rum were put into them not charged in the Invoice, from our supposing enough of other things to load the Battoes, and as they may reach you before a regular Invoice is furnished, we shall note their numbers and Contents at Bottom.

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Part of the Packs A B being come to hand we cannot help taking notice to you of this apparently inferior quality, they appear all to be long hair Skins, which are of all the others the 266 worst; insomuch that a Battoe lead of them is not worth the expense of sending for them to S t Dusky were they to be got on the Beach. now that you have got into a Company at Detroit, if you do not adopt some measure to prevent the Traders from taking such trash, ruin must insue infallibly. we request of you also to advise that the Chuck Skins the mostly in good Season, are exceedingly unfit for the London Market, owing to the manner in which they were stretched and altho' Mr. Vigoe may be of opinion that the Skins are not the less good, we can assure you that their value is much inferior at that Market by which we must all be regulated. Some part of the V Packs being baled up before your letter desiring them to be baled apart came to hand we cannot now follow your directions, but that you may see the difference in the G. A, we shall make them up under a separate mark. In hopes that your next advices may bring us more satisfactory accounts, we are with Sentiments of friendship and esteem, Dear Sir Your sincere Friends

Todd & M c Gill

*Mr. John Askin .*

### **1789: SUPPLIES FOR NORTH WEST COMPANY**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 321.]

Sir — Yours of this date with proposals for Supplying the North West Company with a Certain Quantity of Hulled Indian Corn & Flower during the Space of Three years, in answer to Which, I do Hereby Accept of the Proposal therein Contained, for the quantity of Each Article & at the Prices therein Specified—the Payment for which Shall Be Made in Montreal p r Messrs. M c Tavish Frobisher & Co. on the fifteenth day of October After the Delivery. I am Sir, Yours most H bl Ser t

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John Gregory<sup>82</sup> Agent for the North West Company

<sup>82</sup> John Gregory was in the Northwest by 1778 as partner of James Findley, his brother-in-law. Gregory was one of the founders of the North West Company, and made his headquarters in Montreal, going up to Grand Portage each year. In 1791 he had two shares in the concern, having bought out the interest of William Holmes. In 1804 he signed the agreement for union with the X Y Company, and seems to have retired soon thereafter.— Ed.

Detroit 26th Sept 1789.

*John Askin Esq .*

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### **1790: OUTFITTING AT GREEN BAY**

[Letters from Pierre Grignon to Pierre Antaya. MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library, Grignon letter book, pp. 66–68. Translated from the French.]

La Baie 25th August, 1790.

*To Mr. Antaya at la prairie .*<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Pierre Pelletier *dit* Antaya has long been recognized in Wisconsin history as one of the founders of the village of Prairie du Chien, but little has been known of his personality. These letters addressed to him by Pierre Grignon of Green Bay make it possible to estimate Antaya's standing as a trader. He was probably a native of Canada, but removed early to the Illinois country, where the family is known to have settled as early as 1751. The registers of Ste. Genevieve frequently contain this name; and a granddaughter of Antaya, who died in 1902 at Prairie du Chien, asserted that her mother was born in St. Louis in 1775. The tradition is that the Antaya family came to Prairie du Chien in 1781,

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possibly with a desire to be under British rather than Spanish or American protection. The following letters indicate Antaya's close connection with the traders at Mackinac. He appears to have had relations with the Fox Indians, and his wife is reported to have been of that race. He probably died before Pike's visit in 1805, and his immediate descendants were daughters who married into the La Pointe and Fraser families.— Ed.

Sir —I hope that your health has been good since you left me to follow the fortune which certainly should await you, if the vows that I have made on your behalf are listened to. You have begun your task under very advantageous circumstances, and I do not doubt in spite of the ambitious measures of certain people, that you will succeed. I congratulate you in advance, and request you to await the invoice that I am sending to the prairie. I believe you are too honest to wish to take advantage of my confidence, and although things have been said of you at Michilimackinac of which I shall send you the details when I send my consignment, I have abated nothing of my belief in you, since I allowed you, to make your choice from among my Goods. There is no doubt that if you had succeeded, they would have made you many offers, but do not allow yourself to be surprised, and distinguish between the one who serves you as a friend, and those whose only view is to make a profit by fawning upon you. For you should not Doubt that the one who trusts in your probity will still believe therein if you do your best, and try to work for our mutual advantage. I have never wasted my Goods, and I do not think I am doing so now in trusting to you. You ought therefore to have a just idea of this and strive to justify my confidence. It is your place now to respond thereto. Believe me I pray, Yours &c

[Pierre Grignon]

I cannot go myself to see you, you yourself see the impossibility, but I send to you in my place, one who will give you what you need, and will arrange everything for the best. Wait for him I beg you. Without turning aside from what you have done you may prove to me by this, that I am right in being your servant and good friend.

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La Baie 12 Sept. 1790.

*To Mr. Antaya at la prairie .*

Sir —I repeat the greeting I have already sent to you, and within six days I will send you the proof of my remembrance, persuaded that you will render me one in return. I extend it also to what you have told me and to what I have written you myself. Do not be impatient at the delay, I do not Think that it can be prejudicial to you, and when [the goods] arrive. I beg you to notice that I have done for you as well as I can, but not what I would wish. I think that we shall be ready as soon as the others, and it will be enough for you at present to know that the Goods that I have promised you will not be wanting, and that you will not fail to receive them. Once en route you may believe they will not be slow in reaching you. It is your duty after that to respond to my good faith. I have treated you with all possible frankness, persuaded that you will take account thereof, and that I make no mistake in trusting you. Do not make an arrangement with anyone else, and do not believe them; as I have already said, their offers may be advantageous for the moment, that the desire for your furs influences them. I do not think that you have had occasion to complain of the Beginning, keep to the same arrangement in the future, and it may be even more advantageous for you.

Believe me to be one who is with Sincerity your Servant

P. G.

La Baie 24 Sept. 1790.

*To Monsier Antaya at La prairie .*

Sir —I fulfill my engagements with you, and send you the Canoe that I have promised. I trust that you will likewise keep your promise, therefore I do not diminish the invoice except by what may be necessary in case of the foundering of the merchandise itself, for fear of



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giving you useless expense. Supposing that you are not without provisions, I have sent the voyageurs off with what will last only until they meet the Savages, from whom they must get enough to last as far as la prairie. My preceding letters have sufficiently advised you of ray Sentiments since I cannot Doubt the successful result of my Confidence in you, and now I expect return therefor. I should never do the same again if you should deceive me. You see yourself the Damage you can Cause me. A Canoe without provisions in an advanced season is not one to enter the wintering country. Besides it is the articles you have requested of me, that have caused this to go out unassorted, unlike a Canoe I should send into winter quarters. It goes under your name, I hope that you will be prompt, and that you will have a good journey in order to give me the pleasure of seeing you again next Spring. In that hope I am Your &c.

P. G.

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### **1791–92: CONDITIONS AT MACKINAC**

[Source, same as preceding document, but pp. 70, 76. Translated from the French.]

La Baie [June 25, 1791].

*To Mr. Cotté .*

Sir —I received your last which leads me to think that your health is good, since you do not speak of it. It is not true of my own of which I have nothing good to say. Nothing new in our little Country. There are few events that can disturb your province and some fortunate ones that you may suppose I am not a little interested in. I cannot but be charmed with your share, and congratulate you on the successful return of your traders to Quebec, as well as to Makinack. I cannot leave as early as you Wished. I shall not embark for six days, but that need not retard you at all. Do your business, I have no Choice to make in your Goods, and what is left will be all right for me, so you may depart for le pick<sup>84</sup> without

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waiting for me. We will have time to see one another on your return. Adieu, Sir, I have performed your Commissions, do likewise for me. Persuading you that I am &c.

84 Le Pic was a trading post on the north shore of Lake Superior, about 200 miles from Sault Ste. Marie. It was not founded until after the beginning of the English regime. Probably it belonged to Cotté, who was an independent trader and did not join the coalition. Later, the post passed into the hands of the North West Company, and for many years was maintained by Hudson's Bay Company people. The Canadian Pacific Railway now crosses Pic River near its mouth, and not far from the site of the old fur-trade post.—Ed.

P. G.

La Baie [June 16, 1792].

*Monsieur Gabriel Cotté .*

Sir —I have had the pleasure of learning by your Canoe that you have safely arrived at Makinac in good health. I wish that it may continue to be the Best possible. I Thank you for the interest you take in mine. It is good enough, 271 I have nothing to complain of at present. I yield to your desires in regard to the house,<sup>85</sup> and against my own interests. After having refused five thousand livres for it, for fear of harming you, I offer it to you for three thousand five hundred in order to conclude with you in good friendship, all the more since you do not intend to Return any more.<sup>86</sup> I hope, Sir, that for your part, you will be gallant enough not to trouble me in the choice of Goods, it is with that expectation that I do not wish to disturb Mr. Billon<sup>87</sup> in the Clauses of the transfer. I entered into a bargain with this Gentleman to sell you my Peltries, but he has not been willing to give me my Price, which however was not Large considering the quality of the Peltries, which I can say is of the Best. My wife Thanks you very much for what you sent her and prays you to believe that she is very grateful therefor, and as for me, I have the honor of being Yours

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85 For the lot that was granted Pierre Grignon upon the island of Mackinac, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, pp. 432–434. Many of the older traders kept a house in Mackinac for use during the summer trading season, even while making their homes elsewhere.— Ed.

86 It would seem from this letter that Cotté intended to leave the Upper Country in 1792; but see the evidence *ante*, p. 161, note 17.— Ed.

87 Bartholemi Billon, a friend of Grignon, lived in Montreal, and made trading trips to Mackinac. To his care was entrusted the education of Grignon's sons, when they were sent to Montreal to school. Wisconsin MSS., 29C2, in-the Wisconsin Historical Library, contains an account (dated 1793) for the schooling of Amable, Pierre, and Charles Grignon, made out in favor of Billon.— Ed.

[Pierre Grignon]

### 1792: FUR-TRADE UNPROFITABLE

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 2, p. 58.]

London 10th Augst, 1792.

Dear Askin —I wrote you by the Spring Ships Since which I am favored with yours of the 20 May. Mr. McGill has been so employed in forwarding Goods &c that hitherto he has 272 little to me on Business. I am extremely sorry to hear your Indian Trade has been generally bad and that you are among the unsuccessfull. I agree with you that pushing that trade answers no good purpose, I have strongly recommended to the House to curtale & Lessen our connections in that Trade, for when I considered the uncertainty of our retaining the Posts, the Warr between the Indians & Americans, and the evident fall on furs I am convinced it is an unsafe & unprofitable business, and will continue so for two or 3 years. I am certain there will be a fall in Furrs at this Market this year of 15 to 90 pr. Ct. and every apperance they will continue falling for 2 or 3 years which has ever been the

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case, therefore untill matters comes back to the old standard those who do least will do best. I am certain there is this year double the quantity of Goods intended for that trade that it can pay for, I trust your New Govern s : may open some advantagious Trade that may answer your purpose better.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> The reference here is to the act for the division of Canada and the organization of a separate government for the upper province, which passed parliament May 14, 1791.— Ed.

I am happy in hearing you and Family enjoy good health Long may it continue, I enclose a letter for Miss Therese<sup>89</sup> to which I reffer you for family [news] Mr. Robertson<sup>90</sup> is now here he talks of paying you a visit in the Spring, which I have my doubts off unless his business at Detroit gos wrong, he is

<sup>89</sup> Thérèse Askin married Capt. Alexander McKee, son of the Revolutionary Loyalist of the same name. He made his home about a mile below Sandwich, Ontario, and served under Proctor in the War of 1812–15.— Ed.

<sup>90</sup> William Robertson, brother of Samuel (noted *ante*, p. 241), came to Detroit in 1782, and for two years acted as clerk or agent for a local firm. Going into business for himself, he acquired a competence and a large landed property about Detroit. In 1789–90 he served on the landboard of the district of Hesse, Upper Canada, having refused a judgeship) for the same district. Some time in 1790 he retired to England, and thereafter made but occasional visits to Detroit. He died early in the nineteenth century, leaving much of his property to his nephew William, of Queenston, Ontario.— Ed.

<sup>273</sup> Surprised at not hearing from any of his friends this Spring. Please remember me kindly to the Commod r :<sup>91</sup> as I suppose the Naval business will be immediatly under Gov r : Simcoe<sup>92</sup> it will make it mere pleasant and easy for him and put more in his power to serve his Friends, I hope to hear often from you, and with Kind Respects to Mrs. Askin & family believe me over yours Sincerely.

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91 The reference is to Commodore Alexander Grant, a brother-in-law of John Askin, for whom see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 311, note 33. In addition to that sketch, it should be said that Grant was for many years a member of the executive council of Upper Canada; and In 1805, when serving as president of the council, was *de facto* governor of the province during the interregnum between Governors Hunter and Gore.— Ed.

92 John Graves Simcoe was an English soldier, born in 1752 and educated at Eton, and Merton College, Oxford. [n 1771 he was commissioned in the 35th infantry, served throughout the American Revolution, and surrendered with Cornwallis at Yorktown (1781). In 1790 he entered parliament, and next year was appointed lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, where he arrived in the summer of 1792. After four years of governorship, he was granted leave of absence and sent (1796–98) to manage affairs at San Domingo. He never returned to Canada, dying in England in 1806.— Ed.

Isaac Todd

*Mr. John Askin .*

### 1793: REGULATIONS PROPOSED

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 94.]

Sir —With the Utmost Submission and Defferance to your Excellencys better Judgment I beg leave to Suggest a mode of Carrying on the Indian Trade to the Westward by means that would in the first Instance in a great measure Secure the Lives & property of the Traders, in the Second procure a greater Consumption of Goods & larger remittances in Furs, & in the third furnish the Indians with what Commodities they might want on the Frontiers and by that means prevent them retiring 18 274 from the best Hunting Grounds & leaving that part of the Country free & oppen to the Encroachments of new Enemies.

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That the Fidelity & good Character of Each person desirous to Trade with the Indians beyond the foot of the Rapids be Ascertained to the Satisfaction of the Commanding officer, Coll. McKee<sup>93</sup> & such others as they may think Worthy of Trust after which such person to be Admitted as a Joint Partner in all the Indian Trade carried on beyond the Afors d : Place he conforming to the regulations made for that Purpose which regulations before Carried into Execution to be Transmitted to you by the Commanding Officer of the Post for your Excellencys Approbation.

<sup>93</sup> Governor Simcoe built (1794) a British fort on American territory at the foot of the rapids of the Maumee. Probably, however, Askin here refers to the commanding officer of Detroit, Col. Richard England, and the agent for the Western Indians, Col. Alexander McKee, whose store and buildings were on the south side of Maumee River, opposite Fort Miami. For these two persons see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii. pp. 434, 443 respectively.— Ed.

That all the Trade of that Country should be carried on by a Company to consist of Persons of the forgoing Characters. That no Traffic should be carried on but in Stockaded Trading Forts nor less than Twenty four men Exclusive of the Trader & his Interpreter in Each Fort which men should take the oath of Allegiance & by there Agreement be Obligated to mount Guard & do Duty as Soldiers so far as necessary for the Preservation of the Lives & property of the People in it. That These men should be Commanded by a Person of Fidelity & Prudence Approved of by the Commanding Officer.

I beg your Excellency will Excuse my want of method in conveying my Ideas & Suffer me to say that I have no wish so at Heart as that of promotating the welfare of his Majestys Goverment Under your directions & should it Please your Excellency to Enact any Laws for the regulations of the Trade on the Frontier and that any Information I'm possessed of would on that occasion be necessary, I will with much Chearfulness <sup>275</sup> go to Niagara<sup>94</sup> for that purpose and Always, think myself greatly Honored in Executing your Commands.

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94 Niagara, at the mouth of the river on its west side, was the seat of the government of Upper Canada under Governor Simcoe. He arrived there July 26, 1792, and made headquarters at Navy Hail,' built during the Revolution by Haldimand, for the accommodation of the naval officers on Lake Ontario. Simcoe had this repaired, and made it his official residence. There, in the summer of 1793, he entertained the United States commissioners who were endeavoring to obtain peace with the Indians. See Gen. Benjamin Lincoln's Journal in *Mass. Hist. Colls.*, 3d series, vol. v.— Ed.

I am with Great Submission Your Excellencys Most Obedient & very Humble Servent

[ John Askin ]

Detroit February the 22 1793.

*Governor Simcoe .*

### 1793: DISPUTE WITH EMPLOYÉ

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library; Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 60B1. Translated from the French.]

We the arbitrators named by the Parties in the Case between Sieur Charles Reaume and Ambroise Dubeau his Clerk,<sup>95</sup> have found, after the Depositions taken that the Said Ambroise Dubeau has not followed the orders of the said Charle Reaume his Bourgeois, and Declarations showing that he has done his work badly on Several occasions, that he ought to lose his Wages at la prairie Du Chien.

<sup>95</sup> For Charles Reaume see *ante*, p. 142, note 88. Ambroise Dubeau had wintered in 1786–87 on St. Peter's River, apparently as clerk for James Aird.— Ed.

April 20, 1793.

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J m Ealing

J. Bleakley

J. Giasson

Jam s . Aird<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> These were traders in the Mississippi valley, and probably all members of the Mackinac Company.

Josiah Bleakley was in 1783 storekeeper and clerk for the Indian department at Mackinac; in 1785–86 he wintered on the upper Mississippi. He appears to have been associated with Porlier on the lower Mississippi in 1812, and at Montreal signed an invoice as late as 1814.

Jacques Giasson was son of the trader mentioned in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 197, note 52. Born at Montreal in 1747, he was active in the trade of the Upper Country from his youth until his death in 1808. In the letter given in facsimile in *Ibid.*, p. 462, the name erroneously transcribed “Grayson” should be Giasson.

For Aird, see *Ibid.*, p. 437, note 51.— Ed.

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### 1796: BRITISH EVACUATE DETROIT

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 3, p. 208.]

Detroit 2 July 1796.

Dear Askin — I leave in your care 64 packs Musk t M[arked] No. 1 to 64, which I request you will send to Fort Erie<sup>97</sup> as soon as possible either in the Kings Vessels or any other



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sending with them an account to Mr. Warren and Mr. Hamilton,<sup>98</sup> there is also 17 packs that Mr Hands has & a like number with Mr Dufresne<sup>99</sup> if you can assist in Getting them down, I wish you

<sup>97</sup> Fort Erie was erected in 1764 by Capt. John Montross at the entrance to Niagara River, on the west bank. This was a preliminary to Bradstreet's expedition to Detroit of the same year. During the Revolution it was maintained chiefly as a depot of supplies, and rebuilt at various intervals (1778, 1790, 1807). In the War of 1812–15 Fort Erie played an important part in the campaigns around Niagara. In July, 1814, it was seized by the Americans, who successfully defended it during a severe siege of nearly two months. Upon the retirement of the American army, in November of the same year, the fort was blown up, and its ruins are still to be seen.— Ed.

<sup>98</sup> John Warren was at Fort Erie as early as 1780, and for many years acted as assistant commissary. He was in the transportation business, and died at that place in 1832.

Robert Hamilton was the founder of Queenston, on Niagara River. For a portrait and sketch, see Buffalo Hist. Sec. *Publications*, vi, pp. 73–95.— Ed.

<sup>99</sup> William Hands was an early Detroit merchant, who elected to remain British in 1796 and removed to the east side of the river. He, or a son of the same name, was sheriff at Amherstburg in 1818.

Louis Dufresne was from Montreal, coming to the Upper Country about 1795. In 1796 he was recommended for the post of government blacksmith at Fort St. Josephs, where he was in service as late as 1804.— Ed.

<sup>277</sup> would as they are for us I think by going to the mouth of the River with Coln 1 . England<sup>1</sup> you might Get him to leave an order or at Least a request with the Command r . there to give you the first Kings Vessels that returns from F t . Erie to take packs, this on

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Account of freight owing you, and on this assurance you might be ready to send the packs down I am Yours Sincerely

1 For a reference to Col. Richard England, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 443, note 60. England was leaving Detroit, after having delivered it into the hands of the Americans.—Ed.

Isaac Todd

*John Askin Esq .*

Endorsed: Col. England wrote from Fort Erie to John Askin about July 18th–20th 1796.

### **1798: FURS CAPTURED BY FRENCH**

[Source, same as preceding document, but vol. 5, p. 11.]

Montreal 21th April 1798.

Dear Sir —We are your debtors for favors of the 23d & 31st Jan ry and of the 13th Feb ry ulto and pay attention to their contents the only matters in your first that require particular answer seem to be respecting the Men you wish should be engaged, a Miller & the Invoice of Goods forwarded last Fall. To the first, out of Six for you & Mr. Anderson,<sup>2</sup> we have met with but two as Miller, & we find by an invoice remaining here of a Bale dry Goods & Roll of Tobacco, it must have been omitted to be endorsed and we now hand it to you, ammount £57.9. 10 Cy. at your debit in October 1797. The Silver works order'd for Mr. Anderson & your own order for Smiths Utensils, we have put in Hand of a Silver smith to get done & order'd

2 John Anderson was a trader who had formerly lived near Pittsburgh, and removed to the Detroit country about the close of the Revolution. He was closely connected In business with Askin, and appears to have traded in northern Ohio. Probably the Col John Anderson

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of the militia (1805), afterwards justice of the county' Court, and auditor of public highways, was his son.— Ed.

278 yours from Quebec, the first will be got down but we are not yet informed respecting the smiths Tools &c. as to the expence of going in a Boat, it will no doubt come much higher than by Vessel.

We are doing everything in our power to get the Winterers & if they can be had may go up in Mr Parks<sup>3</sup> Boat or in two that we are sending for Mr M c Gregor.<sup>4</sup> You will probably have heard by the States that one of our Annual Fur Ships was captured & carried into Bourdeaux by the French and your parcel was shiped in her what effect the loss of so great a Supply will have on the London Market seems to be very uncertain & people are divided in their opinion because one of our great outlets for Skins & Furs was Germany & the goods will of course be had in France at less expense & perhaps price too. Mr. Todd & our prior have seen your letter of the 13th Feb ry . Having nothing more interesting, We remain very truly Dear Sir Your most obd t servt

<sup>3</sup> William Park was one of the early merchants of Detroit, being there as early as 1780, when he acted as representative of James Sterling. The next year the firm was William Park & Co., a few years later, Meldrum & Park. The latter was spoken of as desirable for a magistrate of the new British government of 1792, and in 1796 elected to remain a British subject. He was still living in 1807, although apparently no longer in active business.— Ed.

<sup>4</sup> Gregor McGregor was an early British merchant of Detroit, being mentioned as early as 1774. Four years later he was made captain of militia in the place of James Sterling, and in 1788 served the district of Hesse, Canada, as sheriff and superintendent of inland navigation. Later he became major and colonel of local British militia. Although in 1796 he elected to remain a British citizen, he had a place at Grosse Point, where he resided as late as 1808.— Ed.

James & A. M c Gill

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*John Askin Esq .*

Memorandum: Ship Ariadné, E. Boyd taken, value on board of yours N Y 1391.8.6.

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[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 17.]

Montreal 27 April 1798.

*John Askin Esq .*

Dear Sir —We wrote you on the 21st inst and the present serves chiefly to hand statements of Accounts up to 10th instant agreeable to custom; in your acct appears a balance of £725.7.9 & in that under title of John Anderson & Co of £426.18.1 of both Currency & in our favor which we trust you will find right Last night we had advices from [England with Sales of deer Skins on 3 Feby which we are very sorry to say is 20% worse than last year & it falls particularly on the heavy Skins; the general average of Detroit Deer Skins does not exceed # Stg. & the Charges on Skins are not less than # Stg. from which you may judge of their value with you as to Peltries we can say nothing certain but fear for them also, the Sales of them was fixed for 8 March; [we] certainly regret the capture of your Furs, but we are at this moment inclined to think that it has saved you from a greater loss. As at present it is not possible to say when the Trade Ships may arrive & those Goods are not ordered for your account from [England we suppose that after seeing how payments are likely to come in that you will have modelled an order to answer your Trade, we mean your own for [the goods for] Anderson & Col. Gouin<sup>5</sup> have been ordered from England. we do not wish you to be without Goods but we wish you at all times as old Friends to weigh the means of payment to the undertaking that in advanced years the pressure of Engagements may not annoy & aid to bind down.

5 Charles Gouin belonged to a prominent French family in Detroit, being born at that city in 1752. He long retained vivid recollections of the siege of Pontiac (1763), for many of its

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scenes he witnessed from his father's house; he related them for publication in 1824 (see *Mich. Pion. & Hist. Colls.*, viii, pp. 344–351). At the latter date he occupied the parental homestead, after having had an adventurous career as trader and militia officer. Gouin lived to an old age, being still alive in 1834.— Ed.

We can meet with no Miller at your price and had few Engagés against the time however of sending up Mr. Andersons 280 Goods some may be had, which we presume will answer his purpose. We are Dear Sir Your very obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>s</sup>,

James & And. McGill

P.S. Under cover are your two notes to I. Todd & J. M. McGill omitted to be returned in winter

J. A. M.

### **1799: NEW NORTH WEST COMPANY.**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 169.]

Montreal 25 January 1799.

Dear Askin —I received your several letters, and observed what you say respecting Trade at your post it is nothing new when money is gained one or two years in a post they must loose five business is much the same here all Trades overdone from your information. I have alter'd my plan and sold off all my importations at cost & Charges so I am again free living on stock which goes very fast, and [what] the next will be cannot say. the New North West Company is going on it will be a considerable struggle but I know who will gain.<sup>6</sup> The one party is a new rais'd corps without discipline, the other old veterans I cant find one man of experience that has the least knowledge in the North concern'd Forsyth does the business here and Sharp<sup>7</sup> at the portage, I thank you for the memorandum &c, you sent me. I did not mean that my Nephew<sup>8</sup> should

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6 Referring to the corporation usually known as X Y Company. See *ante*, p. 169, note 30.— Ed.

7 Probably George Sharp, a prominent fur-trader, who in 1786 was in the Southwest Company, giving information to the British commandant at Detroit. In 1790 he reported upon American movements in Ohio, and is noted as declaring for British citizenship in 1796. He died, as per letter published *post*, in 1800.— Ed.

8 This is Alexander Henry the younger, whose journals were edited by Elliott Coues (New York, 1897). He is known to have been with his uncle at Montreal in 1787. In 1799 he entered the fur-trade, wintering until 1808 at several posts on Red River, whence he reported upon the expedition of Lewis and Clark. For three years he was at Saskatchewan posts, being in 1813 sent to Columbia River, where, with Donald McKenzie, he took over the charge of Astoria when that post was surrendered by the Americans. In April, 1814, both traders were drowned in the mouth of the river by the overturning of a small boat.— Ed.

281 have settled at Sagana or the Indian Country but at Detroit. he is going to the North West—With the old Company. I am informed that Sheipland was at Philadelphia with the Indians from Detroit but cannot know what has been done, but can guess that Isaac Todd was there at the Time but has not returned I suppose you will have the News—such as Never was known—Admiral Nelson with 13 Ships of the line attacked the Toulon fleet, which took Boanaparte to Egypt and took Eleven of the french the Beys or Generals in Egypt has killed the greatest part of her army,<sup>9</sup> Nelson's fleet also destroyed 300 Transports

9 The battle of the Nile, fought in Aboukir Bay, August 1, 1798.— Ed.

Admiral Warran has Taken & Destroyed the Brest fleet going to Ireland with troops. The french Landed a number of troops there sometime before these, but they were all taken or killed. The Turks has declar'd war against france, and it is supos'd Germany Russia & all

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the world will do the same. America talks big, they feel Bold. all this good news has rais'd our spirrits furs in England will sell, by the best Information I can get far less than last year Beaver very great fall Deer about the same as last year Bear much less Raccoons a fall Muskratts will sell here 20 coppers good, no small ones —to 22—that is if those shiped for England [this] fall, sells for that in London p r Cwt if for less they will return to America and over *stock* the market, then a fall. I expect Todd up soon with all the news. he like myself growing old always complains. one of your old friends General Christie<sup>10</sup> took his

<sup>10</sup> Gen. Gabriel Christie was a veteran of the British army, having had the rank of colonel as early as 1762. He does not appear to have come to America until 1768, when he was lieutenant-colonel of the 60th (or Royal American) regiment for ten years. Probably it was at that time that Askin formed his friendship. In 1787 he returned to Canada after an absence of several years, and was until his death (1799) colonel-commandant of the above regiment. He was promoted from major-general (1781) to lieutenant-general (1793), and finally to general (1798). His death occurred at Montreal.— Ed.

282 departure for the other world a few days, ago, old standards diminishes very fast. there is not more than five [or] six remaining in Montreal which are Dobie, John Neagles, Major Hughs, James Morrison, and myself Tod came sometime after the conquest, we have lost that number in about two years—so we may keep a sharp look out. Tell my old friend Com'odore Grant that I received a letter from Doctor Wright Barbados 24 August Mrs. Wright<sup>11</sup> and the children is well, they have an adition of one to their family since they left this. as the time is so very short for us, we should endeavor to meet once more, which you may do this summer and bring Mrs Askin with you. I have tired your patience with so much stuf, So when you are half through lay this by for another time, and believe me ever, with my wishes & that of my family for the Happiness of you and your family Your affectionate friend

<sup>11</sup> The eldest daughter of Commodore Grant married a Doctor Wright of the English army. — Ed.

Alexander Henry

*John Askin Esquire Detroit Mich .*

**1799: OUTFITTING FOR WISCONSIN**

[Source; same as preceding document, but p. 226.]

Detroit 6 Mar. 99.

Dear Sir —The Bearer hereof Mr. [Ebenezer Allen<sup>12</sup> has applied to me to know If there is any merchant who I think

<sup>12</sup> Ebenezer Allen was an American from Vermont, possibly the son of Maj. Ebenezer Allen, who was a Revolutionary soldier serving at Bennington and Fort Ticonderoga. In 1791 he was in correspondence with Joseph Brant, who speaks of his influence with the Indians. In 1795 Allen, with two associates, formed a plan for securing a large land grant from Congress—it 'is said, by questionable means. He induced Askin and some other Detroit merchants to embark in this scheme, which in the end came to naught. Nothing further is known regarding his proposed fur-trading expedition to Wisconsin.— Ed.

283 would advance a Small Indian Cargo on getting Security for the payment. as I think you wrote me last year of having ordered out goods of that kind, and perhaps have not disposed of them, I mentioned you to him he says his plan is to go to the Ouisconsin, on or near the fox River and he will acquaint you with the rest of his Scheme of this, or the place of Trade I am no judge you are so much better yourself. I therefore have no advice to give respecting the intended trade, nor must you consider me as answerable in any respect, should matters not turn out well. my intentions are to serve both. Mr Allen is not my debtor, nor to my knowledge does he owe any merchant here. I have seen his deed, from Government for between two & three Thousand acres of Land, a part of this he has sold for £3000 and I believe little or no payment is made yet, nor has he given Deeds, as I understand for what he sold but intends to do so, and take Mortgages which mortgage I



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suppose is to be the Security for the payment of the goods he may get of you or any other. I have heard that there is a grist & a saw mill on his lands & an excellent pinery therefore must be valuable, & have only to add that Mr. Allen is as active and enterprizing a man as any in the province & perfectly Sober. I have now stated the business fair on both sides so far as is come to my knowledge therefore do as you think fit.

[ John Askin ]

Endorsed: John Askin to Mr. Alex d Henry of Montreal.

### 1799: COMPETITION IN THE NORTHWEST

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 245.]

Montreal 8th May 1799.

Dear Askin —I received your favor of January am Happy to find your Health and spirits are so good for me my Health is not so good as usual and I have symptoms of old age advancing rappid, so much that unless I see you this summer I am affraid I never will. but I have no reason to complain since on calculation since my time there has been Two Thousand Million buried a few years can make no difference, if we 284 can only approve of our conduct while here we need fear nothing hereafter Hope and reliance on Providence is all we can do. there is fie fear of being worse treated than others. I seem to be more anxious to know if you and I will ever meet there, than anything else. our old friend Todd is going to Niagara and expects to meet you there was it not for a voyage to New York which I must make I would go also was it only to see you I am informed the President has ordered a Council to be held in Detroit this summer to hear the Complaints of the Indians. but I think nothing will do. Congress is selling the Lands on Lake Erie to the Westward of the N England Grant<sup>13</sup> William Robinson<sup>14</sup> is here busy nursing his child and taking care of his wife by Gentlemen who this day arrived from London in February bring Ammount of Deer Skin Sale, they did very well much the same as last but bad appearance fore

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Raccoons, dont you send any here if Possible for they will sell badly. good Muskratts will bring from 20 to 22 sols here—there is no accounts of other furs. if Raccoons sells badly Detroit Trade must be much injured, and the N W Company on

13 “New England grant” is the term used to designate the Connecticut Western Reserve, which was retained by that state when in 1786 its Western land claims were ceded to the United States. This reserve extended westward 120 miles from the Pennsylvania boundary; that is, as far as the present western boundaries of Huron and Erie counties. West of that, was territory guaranteed to the Indians by the treaty of Greenville (1795). The Indian title to a portion of this land was extinguished in 1806. Before that date, no sale thereof by Congress could have been legal. It is difficult, therefore, to determine what Henry here refers to. Possibly he was speaking of what were known as the “Firelands,” a reserve (made in 1792) of 500,000 acres in the western portion of the Connecticut tract, for the benefit of the sufferers by British aggression during the Revolution. In 1799, the Connecticut legislature passed an act incorporating the proprietors of this tract into a body politic. However, no actual sales were made therein until after 1806; but there was considerable speculation in these lands, titles to which were to be granted after the survey of the tract. Henry may refer to this activity.— Ed.

14 Probably this was the elder William Robertson, for whom see *ante*, p. 272, note 90.— Ed.

285 account of opposition it is said intends to send quantitys of Goods to Detroit & Makinac to sell at cost and Charges, because Forsyth & Co interfets with their trade in the North. the War seems to have commenced between them, like the french Derectory they will not allow any kings but themselves.

as for Politics, things seems not to stand so favorable as they did at the close of the last year, the french has obliged the king of Naples to leave his Kingdom of which they have Possession. Boanaparte still seems to have Possession of Egypt, and it [is] supos'd the french will not stop until they have taken all the continent of Europe. the Idea of Liberty and

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equallity, is still gaining ground. England is intending to make a Union with Ireland which will I expect be a bad business before it is settled, as the Irish is much against it, and even our friend Isaac [Todd] disaproves of the English craming the Irish with what they dont like.

I am sorry I have nothing to ammuse you further my family is all well and joins in best wishes for yours dont forget my best respects to Mrs. M c Kee who I would be glad to see, and remain while there is a spark remaining your sincere friend

Alexander Henry

*John Askin Esquire at Detroit .*

### **1799: SHIPPING ON LAKE HURON**

(Source, same as preceding document, but vol. vi, p. 754. Translated from the French.)

Michi Makinac 5 June 1799.

Monsieur —I have received your letter dated April 30th and thank you for your attention. You said that “le Saquinaat” ought to leave May 20 but it appears she did not, for she should be here. I beg you if you receive any articles for me to send them to me by any Boat whatsoever that may come, for I much fear that My Goods coming up this spring will be late, which 286 will do me much harm. I am Sir with Consideration Your very humble servant

J. Giasson & Co .

Addressed: John Askin Esquire Detroit favor of Mr M c Kinsay to be placed on the “Charlotte”

Endorsed: Mich. June 5, 1799 Messrs Jacque Giasson & Co. to Jn o Askin. rec'd the 17th

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[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 94.]

Detroit 11 June 1799.

Dear Sir —Your Sundry favors of the 4th, 10 & 16 of May reached me some time ago, Since which until now I have not had an opportunity to reply. your Account is right. I had thought it would have been reduced to £3000 York, which would have been the Case, had I received, or you or me from Mr Todd what I then expected with the Bill I sent you.

Under cover herewith I send you the Copy of an Account I sent Mr Giasson ammount 351£-2-11, added to which I paid in august last freight for him to the Ammount of 24-2-0 as I suppose more will be added to this account before the Season is over and he give an order on you for payment it is need. less to add at present. I am sorry to learn that Racoons are so low, yet I do not believe that there is a very great number in John Anderson & Co's Packs; when he comes in which will be soon we will answer your Letter to him in w h the account is covered I suppose very right. Notwithstanding our best endeavors the "Saguinaw" will only be ready to sail tomorrow downward for all the freight to McKinac is gone I am glad to find I may expect Winterers and If only one Boat comes I will be necessitated to purchase another to Raft Hay and transport wood for really, there is hardly any Money to be got accept [except] for whats wanted by either of the Governments which is Hay, wood, timber, Bricks etc. and I wish by every means in my power to make you the best payments I can, but as I before wrote the best will be bad I am Sure, and those who have imported lose Cargoes must Suffer, yet whilst a man is in trade, he Should have an assortment but the quantity Small 287 and well chosen and not so over loaded as to have to trust whore the payment is very doubtful. there is so many Vessels and so little for them to do that I cannot think Mr Giasson will be at the least loss to get down your Packs. I am sorry, both on your account and our own that the "Saguinaw." could not have been sent up but that, Messrs. Meldrum & Park could not agree to unless you or Mr Giasson would allow for her going up empty as If loaded, and I had no instructions of the

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kind from either of you. his Boats are arrived to day, and as Soon as Biscuit is ready they will proceed.

My Eyes having been weak for Some time past, that I'm obliged to write no more than what's necessary, I have only to add that I'm with real regards

J. Askin

Endorsed: Detroit 11 June 99 John Askin to James & And. MGill

### **1799: NEWS FROM MACKINAC**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 100.]

Michilimackinac 17th June 1799.

Dear Sir —Your much esteemed favor of the 28th Ult o . I had the pleasure of receiving some days ago.

Please accept of my best thanks for your kind attention in taking the earliest Oppor y of writing me,

I am very Sorry to find that you are troubled with a weakness in your eyes. I hope by this time you are perfectly recovered. I am happy to learn that Madam Askin & the rest of your family are Well,

We have Nothing [New in this part of the World, The Spring here has been Very cold & backward, Ice were floating in the Lakes here the loth ult o . We have now several Canoes from Montreal, but they bring nothing new. The traders are also coming in from the Westward. The Skin Merchants has not as yet begun to make any purchases. As Corn & flour is Only Arrived, I cannot sa what the price Will be here this Summer, there were No

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Want of either here during the Winter. Please 288 make my best respects to Madam Askin & all your family. And believe me to be Dear Sir Your well wisher & Very Hum b . Servant.

Charles Morison .

John Askin Esq. Detroit per the Schooner "Thomas."

### **1799: ENGAGÉS DESERT**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 131. Translated from the French.]

Michilimakinac July 5, 1–99.

*John Askin Esquire ,*

Monsieur —I forgot to write to you yesterday for a man who deserted fifteen days ago, a winterer, who came up in the canoes. His name is Pierre Turcotte<sup>15</sup> and as he has taken the route to Detroit, and as I believe that you can find him there, these are the advances which have been made him and his engagement contract. He received at Montreal 94 lvs and here 2 lvs 4 and his equipment which amounted to 64 lvs . If you can take him, secure what he owes me, or if he cannot pay, ship him back to me by the first vessel.

<sup>15</sup> In 1818, an employé of this name served the American Fur Company at Fond du Lac (of Lake Superior) at an annual salary of \$600. It was not uncommon for young homesick engages to desert, and afterwards to return to their posts and become useful and able winterers.— Ed.

I send you also the account and engagement contracts of the Three Lafontaines dit Marion, who deserted last year, one at Niagara, and the other two at Detroit. They say that they wintered at the Miamis. If you can take them, do so and make them pay the accounts and the damages if possible. I am Sir with consideration Your very humble Servant

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J. Giasson & Co .

Addressed: John Askin Esquire at Detroit

Endorsed: Michilimackinac July 5th, 1799 Messrs Jacques Giasson & Co. respecting his Engages who run away Recd & Answered 8th July

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### **1799: PRICES FOR PELTRY**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 176.]

Michilickinac 27th July 1799.

Dear Askin —Your favor of the 10th Instant came to hand Sum days ago. I am glad you are pleased with the Exchange I made of your flour and Sugar, I can assure you, that no exchange has been made for that Article Since, On the same terms.

By an express Canoe lately from Montreal to the Grand Portage, We learn that Beaver, Otters & Bears Sold high, the former is said to have Averaged 12 sh. Sterling, And that about the 15th of last Month, 27 Sail of Ships from England arrived at Quebec,

We have nothing new in this part of the World. Please make my best Respects to Madam Askin & the rest of your family, And believe me to be. Dear Askin, Your well wisher & H. Sev t .

Charles Morison .

*John Askin Esq. Detroit .*

### **1800: RIVALRY IN NORTHWEST TRADE**

## Library of Congress

[Source, same as preceding document, but vol. 7, p. 221.]

Montreal 18 January 1800.

Dear Askin —I wrote to you by the last boats since which I have received a few lines saying you was well which you know always gives me great pleasure, but much more could I see you which never will happen in this world. I have been laid up since last october with a complication of disorders, so that I have kept the House, and a great part my Bed, but at present am mending and as soon as I can get strength sufficient will make a trip to the Balls Town spring, which renews ones age. I wish you was there. Mr Todd is going with me he is always complaining when his intestines are empty, but after Dinner recovers wonderfully. I observe what you say respecting hireing young men for three or four years, the opposition to N West has 19 290 raised the price so very high that I dont think they can be got without giving much more than they may be got for at Detroit boys asked me seven & eight hundred livres and would engage only for one year. the Old N West Company is all in the Hands of M c Tavish Frobisher, and M c Kensey<sup>16</sup> is out, the latter went off in a pet, the cause as far as I can learn was who should be the first—M c Tavish or M c K. and as there could not be two Ceasars in Rome one must remove.

16 This refers to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, whose connection with the founding of the X Y Company is outlined *ante*, p. 169, note 30. He was born in the Scotch Highlands about 1755 and came to Canada in 1779, entering the merchant house of Gregory & McLeod at Montreal. In 1784 he made his first voyage West, as far as Detroit. The following year he became a partner in the organization opposing the North West Company, and went up as wintering partner to English River. The opposition having united with the older concern, Mackenzie was sent in 1788 to the Athabasca region, where the following year he made a trip to the Arctic Ocean, discovering the great river that bears his name. In 1791 he visited London, and returning to the Northwest, equipped for further discovery, made (1792–93) his famous journey across the northern Rockies, reaching the Pacific Ocean in July of the latter year. This was the limit of his discoveries and trading in the interior. In 1794 he finally



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left the Northwest, but continued active in the fur-trade. His journal appeared in England in 1801, and the next year he was knighted. After 1804, Sir Alexander was frequently in Canada, serving in the provincial legislature about 1806. In 1812 he settled permanently in Scotland, dying there in 1820.— Ed.

by the last accounts from England there is very bad appearance of furs selling well. they say most of the fur buyers are bankrupts owing to several Houses in Hamburg failing, which has bankrupt all the foreign Houses in London, and several in New York. Seaton Maitland & Co who had all the China business in hand of M c Tavish & Co is shut. I suspect it will fall heavy on them. Muskratts is the only article which may keep at 24—good—and this is owing to Astore<sup>17</sup> and me

<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to see what a marked effect the fur-buying operations of John Jacob Astor had in Montreal at this early date. Born in Waldorf, Germany, in 1763, Astor had come to America in 1783 and embarked in the fur-trade; first as an employee, but after 1786 on his own account. He early began buying at Montreal and shipping to London. His first venture in the China trade occurred in 1880. Astor was quick to take advantage of the surrender of the Northern posts to the United States, and in 1808 founded the South West Company, which later bought out the Mackinac Company—see documents *post*. His Astorian enterprise and the Pacific Fur Company have been graphically described by Washington Irving. The American Fur Company will be noted in connection with later documents. Astor retired from its presidency in 1834, and died at New York in 1848.— Ed.

291 being in opposition, if you can sell yours for that I think you ought, as you may have buyers there, for should Astore & me agree they will fall—unless they should sell high in London, there is only 10,000 Shipt from Quebec, not one from this. Astore & me bought the whole, from 20 to 24, some small parcels at auction from the spirit of opposition sold 26 to 27. I bought 700 Bear Skins at auction when the amount [of] sales incouraged us, very high. that article I am informed will fall one half, and if some new place is not found [for] Raccoons they will go badly. the yankeys will trade Rum for Raccoons should you have any I would recomend you to do it they may not be worth here 6 s . another cause

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has happened contrary to our expectation 50,000 men from England landed in Holland the Duke of York commanded all the Dukes fleet surrendered—the army within a few miles from Amsterdam was drove back to their Landing great numbers killed, and to save the remainder was obliged to make some kind of a convention or Treaty, one of the articles is we are to deliver 8,000 prisoners without exchange. they say there are other stipulations not known. Robinson is well. General Washington Dead My family all join in praying for the Happiness of yours and remain your affectionately

Alexander Henry

Rum is selling 5 sh . Spiritts high, proof Mr Sharp Died yesterday of an inflammation of the Bowells, which shall be a great loss to Leath.18

18 George Leith was a British merchant of Detroit and vicinity, who was in that neighborhood before 1784 and was reputed in 1798 to have rapidly made a fortune. About the time of this letter, he had a store and considerable establishment at Amherstburg.—Ed.

*John Askin Detroit .*

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### **1800: WISCONSIN ENGAGEMENT-CONTRACT**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 56B2. Translated from the French.]

In the Presence of Witnesses was present at La Baye<sup>19</sup> Charles Tason, who has voluntarily engaged and by these presents engages himself to M r . Jacob Franks<sup>20</sup> Merchant here present, and agreeing at his first requisition to leave La Bay in the capacity of a winterer in one of his Canoes or Batteaus, in order to make the Journey, both ascending and descending, to winter in the dependencies of Michilimakinac, to do the

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duty of a man, to be released at the departure of Jacob Franks from La Baye. Also to take good and due Care along the route, and in the said places of the Merchandise, Provisions, Peltries, Utensils and everything necessary for the Voyage, to Serve, obey and execute faithfully all that the said Sieur Jacob Franks or all others representing him shall lawfully and honestly order him to do, to Consider the Latter's profit, avoid his damage, notify him if anything comes to his knowledge, and in general to do all that a good winterer ought and is obliged to do, without trading in his own account, nor absenting himself from nor leaving the said service, under the penalties imposed by the ordinances, and the loss of his wages. This Engagement thus made for and in consideration of the sum of Seven Hundred Livres or Shillings, ancient Currency of this province, will be acquital of all obligation,

19 This is selected from a large number of like documents, both written out and in the form of printed blanks, preserved in the Wisconsin Historical Library, and is here presented as a typical engagement for a general voyageur or "hand." This particular document is somewhat unusual, from having been drawn up in the "Indian country" (so called), instead of in Montreal as customary.— Ed.

20 For a brief sketch of Jacob Franks, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 463, note 85.— Ed.

293 which shall be paid and I hereby oblige myself to release and pay it to the said engagé one month after his return to Michilimakanac; and also in the beginning to furnish him the ordinary Equipment.

For thus &c. Promising &c., obliging &c. Renouncing &c.21 Done and passed at the said La Bay in the year One thousand eight hundred the eighth of May before Noon, and they have signed with the exception of said engage, who having declared on enquiry being made that he did not know how, made his usual mark after having the above read.

21 A customary notarial formula for all deeds and contracts. See *Ibid.*, p. 139, note 82.— Ed.

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The said Engagé agrees to carry at the portages, and cut wood, and will be furnished with tobacco, shoes, and food.

Charles Tason + his mark

Witnesses: John Lawe J. Ducharme 22

22 For a brief biographical sketch of John Lawe, whose papers as published *post* will furnish much additional information, see *Id.*, vii, p. 250. Lawe states in Wis. MSS., 63B25, that he first settled at Green Bay in June, 1799.

Joseph Ducharme was the eldest son of Jean Marie, noted in *Id.*, xviii, p. 161, note 4. He was probably born at Lachine, and does not seem to have settled permanently at Green Bay until the latter part of the eighteenth century. He had a large homestead on the east side of Fox River, on the site of the later Shantytown. In 1831, Ducharme gave the land on which the Catholic church was built. He was known as "Colonel," and possibly served in the Canadian militia. His wife was of Indian extraction, and they had four sons, all of whom had musical tastes.— Ed.

### 1800: PROVISIONS FOR FUR-TRADE

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1B1.]

Detroit 29 May, 1800.

Sir —Your boat [s] arrived late last eve g I have provisioned them from this day, for twenty days, should they arrive in a shorter time they will have to account to you—with respect to 294 the Duties, which may be laid on at Mackinac, you will no doubt get every information there. I shall write you by the next Boats I am sir your H ble Ser t

M. David .23

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23 Moses David probably belonged to the David family of Montreal, whose ancestor, Lazarus, born in England about 1734, came in with Amherst's army. His is the first recorded burial (1776) in the Jewish cemetery of Montreal. One son, David David, was a prominent merchant, and director of the first bank of Montreal. Moses David of Detroit was pro-British during the War of 1812–15, and some goods being sent up for him were seized in 1812 by the American General Hull.— Ed.

10 O'Clock A M

200 lb Pork 300 lb Bisquet 1 ½ Bush Corn

Addressed: Mr. Jacob Franks Mackinac

Endorsed: Letter from Detroit from M r Moses David Dated 29th May 1800.

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 9, p. 151.]

Michilimackinac 10, Feb y 1801.

Dear Askin —I embrace the present Opportunity to inform you that I am well, And am in hopes that this few lines Will find you & family in perfect health. We have Nothing new in this Part of the World. I am afraid there has been but an indifferent Deer hunt last fall, as we had No Snow here that lay Until the 13th of last month, And the Ice only closed the 22d Mr Fraser had to Stay at Mr Campbells 15 Days before he got Over here, Which was on the 24th Ult o .

Flour & Corn is here in plenty, but in No Demand. Please make my best Wishes to Madam Askin & all your family, and believe me to be with much esteem, Dear Sir, Your Very Hum bl Sev t

Charles Morison

*John Askin Esq. Detroit*

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**1801: LICENSES FOR THE FUR-TRADE**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 60B4.]

Wayne County the first day of March 1801.

*Territory of the United States north west of the Ohio .*

This certifies that Jacob Franks is authorized to vend Merchandize within this territory for one year from the date hereof, the said Jacob Franks having this day, paid to me Matthew Ernest Treasurer of the Said County of Wayne<sup>24</sup> the sum of ten Dollars, it being the annual tax imposed on Retailers of Merchandize by a Law of this territory.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Ernest was the first collector for the United States at the port of Detroit. His appointment dated from 1799, with a salary of \$200 and fees, but he was not confirmed by the senate until Jan. 6, 1800. He seems to have been county treasurer (from 1801–05), quartermaster general, colonel of militia, and Justice of the peace. He had a considerable farm near Detroit, at what is known as Springwells. In 1805 Ernest's accounts were found to be in confusion and he was requested to resign, whereupon he disappeared from official life.— Ed.

<sup>25</sup> At this time Wayne County was a part of the Northwest Territory. The law to which this refers is to be found in *Laws of Northwest Territory*, chap. xxxii, sec. 6; it imposed a tax of \$10 on all retailers within the territory, of merchandise other than the produce or manufacture of said territory. The county treasurer was required to give a receipt therefor. In 1805 this tax was raised to \$20 per annum.— Ed.

Matt w . Ernest Treas r . W. C.

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[Extract from a letter dated at Michilimacina May 19, 1801. MS. in Burton Library, vol. 10, p. 15. Translated from the French.]

N. B. They have told us here that for the Grand River, St Joseph River of the Illinois, one must have Permits from the Post<sup>26</sup> to go to those places, but knowing nothing of this I beg  
26 Mackinac and all the country west of a line drawn due north from Fort Recovery to the international boundary was set off on May 7, 1800, as Indiana Territory. Its capital was Vincennes, then commonly known as "Au Poste." "Opost," or (as here) simply "the Post." Licenses for trading with the Indians had been required from the inception of the United States government; the law now in force dated from March 3, 1799, under chap. 46, sec. 7 of "An act to regulate trade and intercourse with Indian tribes," etc. These licenses could be secured of any Indian agent, or of any army officer commanding a post. They cost but \$2, and were indiscriminately given. See letter of William Burnett in H. H. Hurlbut, *Chicago Antiquities* (Chicago, 1881), pp. 71–74. The writer of this letter evidently supposed that the new governor of Indiana Territory would exercise authority over these permits—a reform which he later attempted.— Ed.

296 you to give me some information thereon. I fear it will be difficult for us to get the permits from the Post and not knowing of this and not perhaps acting with sufficient caution in that regard, I flatter myself that you will be good enough to inform me on this subject. We have large interests in these places and if it is necessary to have these permits if possible send me a Blank for the names and places. I beg you to have some four sent us. we receive every year for those that wish to take them a permit from the Commandant and besides we paid last year a license for the privilege of selling, but fearing this is not enough we leave it to you to do what is necessary & beg for a response on this matter by the first Bark.

I am Sir with consideration Your very humble Servant

Jacque Giasson & Co .

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[Reply made to Monsieur Giasson, June 4, 1801, in English.]

Mr. Giasson —I have arranged with Mr. Henry to have him send by Monsieur William Henry of Michilimackinac<sup>27</sup> four licenses of which you will have the Choice. All you have to do

<sup>27</sup> The first “Mr. Henry” is James, a Detroit merchant and tanner. He was in 1803 a justice of the peace, and member of the board of commissioners for Wayne County. Two years later he was a delegate from the same county to the Indiana territorial assembly, and seems to have died before the War of 1812–15.

William Henry of Michilimackinac was probably not the one noted in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 505; but apparently was the brother of James, commander of a vessel on Lake Huron, and very likely an American.— Ed.

<sup>297</sup> is to sign a Bond with two sureties. I would have done that here, but you cannot be embarrassed to find them at your place. I have paid for the licenses here & his brother the Captain who takes the licenses does not know the price I am sir Your very humble Servant

[ John Askin ]

### **1801: MONTREAL EXPORTS OF FURS**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 92.]

Michilimackinac 30 June 1801.

Dear Askin —By your favor of the 1st Instant, I am happy to learn that your health were Restored, May you long enjoy it.

We have Nothing New in this part of the world. A great Number of Packs are come in & many of them are already sent off to Montreal. This year the Skin Merchants are making no purchases here, Corn & flour are in good plenty, So that Bread is Sold by the single



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loaf at 15 sols. My best wishes waits on Madam Askin & the rest of your family, and am sincerely your Well Wisher & H e . S t .

Charles Morison

*John Askin Esqr .*

[Source, same as preceding document, but vol. 11, p. 24.]

Detroit Nov. 5th 1801.

Mr Askin's Compliments to Colonel Hamtramck<sup>28</sup> & sends

<sup>28</sup> John Francis Hamtramck was a native of Quebec, his father having emigrated in 1749 to Canada, from Luxembourg, and married a Canadian-Frenchwoman. Born in 1756, the younger Hamtramck embraced the American cause with enthusiasm, and in 1776, before attaining his majority, joined Montgomery's army at the siege of Quebec. Having served throughout the Revolution in Hazen's corps, the young Canadian continued his career as a soldier, being appointed (1785) a captain in the United States infantry, and the next year major. Upon the reorganization of the army in 1789, Hamtramck became major of the 1st infantry, stationed at Cincinnati. He was a trusted subordinate of Wayne, and in the battle of Fallen Timbers (1794) commanded the right wing. The same autumn he took command at Fort Wayne, continuing there until ordered to take possession of Detroit (1796) for the Americans. He was in command at Detroit until his death, April 11, 1803. Being a catholic, and speaking French as his native tongue, Hamtramck was popular with the older French-Canadian families. He was said to have gone into partnership with James Abbott, a successful merchant, but death cut short his useful career.— Ed.

<sup>298</sup> him under cover the paper he promised by which it appears that the Exports from Quebec in Furs, Skins & Castor [Beaver] in 1800 Ammounted to \$209614 Halifax Cur. or 838,456 Dollars two Thirds of which sum he believes are the proceeds of the North and founds his oppinion from his having been many years Ago in that Trade & afterwards an

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Agent to those who now carry it on so Extensively, also his constant residence Either at Mich[ilimackinac] or this Post since 1764 & being concerned most of the Time in the furr Trade.

### **1802: SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS: LANGLADE'S LANDS**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 135.]

Montreal 15 April 1802.

Dear Sir —We wrote you a Short Letter on the 23 of March acknowledgeing your favor of the 26 December and to give our consent for the late Company of J. & A. M c Gill to the disposing of your property, payable by installments & we now confirm the same. By this opportunity we cannot inclose continuation of Acc't up to the 10th Current, but we shall forward it soon, mean time your Acc t . against Messrs J. Giasson & Co has been settled with very little exception which will be pointed out in transmitting your A/C curr t .

You may be assured it was our wish to throw every thing in your way which we could, but Mr. Giasson now acting for himself thought proper while at Detroit to change Correspondents and when arrived here we could not prevail on him to return to you, which has really pained us, tho he has agreed to employ the Messrs MacGregors being our Correspondents. The 299 Accounts from the Sale of Furs are very favorable; it was the same at the dose of last war, but the year following, both you & the writer have cause to recollect we are Dear Sir Your obed t & very hbl Sev ts

James & And. M c Gill

*John Askin Esqr. Detroit*

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 140.]

Montreal 24 April 1802.

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*John Askin Esq r*

Dear Sir —Our last respects were of the 15 th Inst. and since these we are without any of your favors

Accompanying the present you will find State of Acc t Curr. up to the 10 of the month as is our usual practice, balance in our favor £1981.4.2 Currency, which we hope you will find right as it has diminished something within the last year, we hope you may be enabled to continue the diminution so as shortly to prevent the accumulation of Interest It would have afforded us much satisfaction had Messrs. Giasson now doing business for himself only continued to employ you; he has done otherwise but the Packs of J. G. & Co are to be put on board the “Saguinau” by preference if at MaKinac when they are ready for shipping.

In one of your accounts there is a charge for duties you were bound to pay, we think about £20 york, will you have the goodness to mention if you have paid it and inform us also if Bunnells protested draft has been paid to you.

Having an Interest in 3000 Acres of Land in your District belonging to Langlade of La Baye, which he has authorised Mons. Rocheblave to sell under a very informal Power of Attorney<sup>29</sup> & it being necessary to have a proper Power for conveying

<sup>29</sup> For the letter accompanying this power of attorney, and a note of Noel Rocheblave, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, pp. 462, 463. The power of attorney given to Rocheblave and Porlier is in the library of Edward E. Ayer, Chicago, who has kindly furnished us with a copy See also the next document.— Ed.

300 fixed Property in your Provence, we have had one made out & also a memorial of the Power in your name and Mons. Giasson is to send one of the witnesses interested to see them executed to La Baye; and afterwards to send him to you with these two Papers that you may have them registered; and as we presume they will be sufficient to authorise you to dispose of the Lands, we shall now or some time after transmitt you the Patents, in

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order to your disposing of these Lands at the best price for ready money you can obtain; but previous to your selling them let us know what you think of their value & [arrange] by Advertisement such time for selling them & before a Notary at Maiden as may enable us to return you an answer. wishing you health & comfort, we are Dear Sir Yours most Sincerely

James & And. M c Gill

*John Askin Esq. Detroit*

[MS. in possession of Edward E. Ayer, Chicago. Translated from the French.]

La Bay 8 May 1802.

*Mr. Adhemar St. Martin, Esquire .*

Sir —I have charged Mr. Rocheblave to deposit My Inventory in the Record office, thus Signing in my name the renunciation that I make to the community of goods<sup>30</sup> that I had with Mr. de Langlade for Maintaining my Rights. I hope that you will be good enough to receive this in my Stead.

<sup>30</sup> See the marriage contract in *Ibid.*, pp. 135–140.— Ed.

I beg you to present my respects to the Ladies and believe me with Consideration Sir,  
Your Very h. Servant

The Window Langlade

Addressed: Adhemar St. Martin, Esquire, at Makinac

Endorsed: Letter on Langlade's business, with his Notes. Rec'd from Mr. M c Gill 21st May, 1803. True copy from the original, placed at M c Kinac 29 august, 1802. Adhemar St. Martin Notary Public

A Winnebago Village Reduced from Lithograph in Henry R. Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes* , ii, p. 80

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**1802: UNITED STATES REGULATIONS FOR FUR-TRADE**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 1B4.]

Peorias the 20th of May 1802.

*Mr. Arundel* 31

31 William Arundel was of Irish birth, and came to Detroit before the Revolution. During that time he had a large establishment at Lower Sandusky, where he rescued prisoners, entertained the Moravian missionaries, and was spoken of as a kind, humane, and generous man. After the Revolution he removed westward, and by 1787 was established at Cahokia, where he seems to have acted as agent for the Michilimackinac Company, which traded between the two posts by way of Prairie du Chien and the Wisconsin River. He became a useful citizen of Illinois, where he acquired a large landed property, and served in various local offices. He died at Kaskaskia in 1816, at an advanced age.— Ed.

D r Sir —I lately received a letter from the Attorney General of the Indiana Territory, concerning the Indian trade and as you are now about going to a Country where the opinion of the Attorney General may be of use as well to your Self as to some of your Friends upon this Subject I have taken the liberty to give you an extract of his letter which is as follows, I apprehend that you have taken up a wrong idea of the restrictions contained in the Licenses, from carrying goods &c, to trade with the Indians to trade at their Hunting Camps. the intention of this clause I am authorized to Say was solely to prevent traders from following small parties on their *mere Hunting expeditions* for a few days, and that without their families and not to prohibit selling them their necessaries at any camp which the indians might think proper to form, and in which their wives and

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children accompany them; their camps from my small Knowledge of the indian trade, are in one winter season changed three or four times, it would therefore in my opinion be very detrimental even to the indians themselves to construe the restrictions so as to prevent traders from furnishing them their Goods on the Spot, and would therefore oblige them to carry their Peltries to the Traders at their fixed Stations, often at a considerable distance and as often without a 302 sufficient number of horses, saying nothing about the loss of time in the most precious seasons. From what I have said it will occur to you that no trader at any one of these camps can be permitted to follow a detached party from thence on their hunting expeditions for a few days or to purchase their peltries before the indians return to their main body I believe these restrictions were inserted in consequence of Complaints from the chiefs Stating that traders followed these small parties and before their return for very small trifles purchased the skins when green, and often tempted them to do so with Liquor.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> This opinion was given in reference to a proclamation issued by Gov. William H. Harrison, Aug. 31, 1801, in which that official states that frequent complaints had been made by the Indians of the mischief caused by traders frequenting their hunting camps. The governor therefore notifies them that a regulation has been made by the executive of the United States, whereby the licensed traders are expected to confine themselves to the towns, and not follow the Indians to their hunting grounds; in the future, this regulation will be strictly enforced. See reprint of "Executive, Journal of Indiana Territory, 1800–16," in Indiana Historical Society *Publications*, 111, No. 111, p. 103.— Ed.

The above is the Opinion of M r Jones<sup>33</sup> upon the existing regulations relative to the indian trade. You may now figure to Yourself how much mistaken many traders have been, and how much they now suffer in consequence of that Mistake.

<sup>33</sup> John Rice Jones was born in Wales, Feb. 11, 1759. After being educated at Oxford, and practicing law in London, he came to America in 1784, and located for a few months at Philadelphia. Having decided to seek the West, Jones established himself at Louisville,

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where in 1786 he joined George Rogers Clark's expedition into the Indian country. About this time he settled at Vincennes, where he formed a warm friendship with Harrison, who appointed him (Jan. 29, 1801) attorney-general of Indiana Territory. Jones served in this capacity until 1808, when having a political disagreement with Harrison, he resigned, and removed to Kaskaskia, where he had previously spent some years. About 1810 he emigrated to Missouri, and engaged in mining and smelting lead at Mine à Breton (now Potosi). He was a member of the Missouri constitutional convention (1820), and served as justice of the state supreme court until his death at St. Louis in 1824.— Ed.

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I wish you a pleasant voyage, and hope that you will not forget to write me upon every occasion that presents as I promise on my part to do the Same.

I am, Sir, with much respect & Esteem Your Sincere friend and most obedient Servant

I. Darnielle 34

34 Isaac Darnielle arrived in Illinois from Maryland, apparently about 1794, the second professional lawyer in the territory. He was a classical scholar and of polished manner, but something of a rake, and is said to have eloped from Cahokia to Peoria with a married woman. In later life he became reduced in circumstances, and taught school in western Kentucky, where he died about 1830, in poverty and neglect— Ed.

Addressed: William Arundel Esquire M c Kinac

Endorsed: A true Copy from the Original. William Arundel

[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book "A", p. 276.]

War Department 14th. September 1802.

*Circular to all Indian Agents*

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Sir —The chiefs of many of the Indian Nations having applied to the President of the U. States for the suppression of the sale of ardent Spirits in their several Nations and Congress having authorised the President to comply with the request. It is therefore the wish of the President that you adopt such measures, as will as soon as practicable; with due regard to particular circumstances, prevent the sale of any ardent spirits to the Natives. In order therefore to effect this object, no trader should be allowed to vend any Goods, to the Indians, who shall cary ardent Spirits into their Country for sale or other purposes, and such as are now trading under former licenses should be restricted in like manner. I am etc.

[ Henry Dearborn ]

On margin: Benjamin Hawkins, Govr. St. Clair, Governor Harrison, Silas Dinsmoor, Return J. Meigs, John Johnston, William Wells, Samuel Mitchell, Jona. Halstead, John W. Hooker, Robert Munro, Joseph Chambers, Thomas Peterkin.

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### **1803: A TYPICAL FUR-TRADE ACCOUNT.**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., IA2. Translated from the French.]

Account of Peltries sold to Messrs. J. Giasson & Berthlotte,<sup>35</sup> N Rocheblave & Porlier By Charles Sanguinatte.<sup>36</sup> Namely

<sup>35</sup> Jean Baptiste Berthelot was a prominent trader in Wisconsin between 1800 and the second war with England. Anderson mentions him as being in opposition (1801) in the Sauk villages, and he appears to have had also an establishment at Prairie du Chien. After the War of 1812–15, Berthelot seems to have established himself on Drummond Island, where in 1816 he was granted a lot of land. He long maintained his friendship with



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Wisconsin traders, and many of his letters to the Grignons, Rolette, Porlier, and others are in the manuscript collections of the Wisconsin Historical Library.— Ed.

36 Charles Sanguinet was a wealthy merchant of St. Louis. He was born at Quebec in 1740, and coming West first settled in Detroit. About 1775 he removed to St. Louis, where he married Marianne Condé, and became allied to the prominent French creoles of that place. Being a free lance in the fur-trade, he opposed the established companies and won a large competence, dying at St. Louis in 1818.— Ed.

1803 August 13 For 245 bear skins 90 cubs 26 Otters 11 lynx 30 muskrats for 18,000.0 1  
mink 500 lvs. beaver 434 cat skins 133 deer skins In addition For 7 cubs 20 140 "10 lvs.  
beaver 8 80 " Cats 3 223 To deduct 1 Otter 20 6 deer skins 30 50 173" .0 18, 173.0 305  
1803 August 11 On the account of Messrs. N. Rocheblave [and] Porlier presented this day  
320.10 Balance due to Ch. Sanguinet 17,852.10 Save errors or omissions

McKinac 16th of August 1803 Ch les Sanguinet

Received payment at Michilimakinac 17th of August 1803

Ch les . Sanguinet .

### **1804: TRADE AT MILWAUKEE**

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1B8. Translated from the French.]

Milwaki May 18, 1804.

Sir —I received your account but there are some articles which are not in the invoice that I hope you will have the Kindness to remit, as Mr. Anderson<sup>37</sup> will tell you.

I send you my account which you will find very just and wish that you may send me the Balance by a similar occasion. Sir I am surprised that you do not wish to pay the Account of Mr. Charles Chadonette<sup>38</sup> when, he was your clerk, and the 20

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37 Thomas Anderson was born in Sorel in 1779, his father being a Massachusetts Loyalist. In 1795 he was apprenticed to a Kingston merchant, with whom he remained until 1800, when he came West to enter the fur-trade. For his own description of his experiences, and his life at Milwaukee (1803–06), see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix, pp. 137—206. After serving in the War of 1812–15, he finally settled on Drummond Island, and retired with the British to Penetanguishene in 1828. For thirty years thereafter he was Indian agent for that vicinity, and died at Port Hope, Feb. 16, 1875. Many of his papers and letters are in possession of the Wisconsin Historical Library.— Ed.

38 Charles Chandonnet was born at Quebec in July, 1763. His marriage is recorded at Mackinac in 1792; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, pp. 495, 509. He seems to have been at Milwaukee frequently after 1800, and was employed during the War of 1812–15 by Robert Dickson. For his death in 1814, at the hands of his nephew and adopted son, see *ante*, p. 159, note 12.— Ed.

306 wages of J. B t . Lajeunesse<sup>39</sup> that he has well earned. Sir I am your Very humble Servant

39 Over thirty French-Canadian families bore the surname of “La Jeunesse.” There was likewise one prominent Illinois family of the same name. To which of these the engagé here mentioned belonged, had not been ascertained. Probably he was the same person whom Pike met in 1806 with Louis Grignon on the upper Mississippi.— Ed.

F r Laframboise 40

40 For François Laframboise, see *ante*, p. 158, note 10.— Ed.

I am much obliged to you for the Messages that you have promised

Addressed: To Jacob Franks merchant at Makinac.

**1804: PROVISIONS ON UPPER LAKES**

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 13, p. 13.]

Montreal 20 July 1804.

Dear Sir —We are indebted for your favors of 29 May which we might have answered sooner but having Knowledge that Mr Hamilton would soon return up the Country we postponed until he should so far be the bearer of our respects.

To your proposal of our furnishing your sons with Goods & taking payment next year in whiskey and Flour at Michilimackinac we have to observe that as we have not any direct interest in the Trade to that Post, we have no occasion whatever to buy either whiskey or Flour for exporting other Goods, we therefore do not wish to begin a Trade, in which agents must be employed & who would for their trouble get all the profit; indeed we do not at present wish to extend our Trade in your part of the Country & therefore must decline supplying the Goods you have wished for.

You wish us to try some other House, but really we Know not of any to whom the proposal would be, suitable; and we fear that our declining it might prove a sufficient reason to other Houses not to take up the business; you had better therefore not count on the memorandum being fulfilled.

We note the price you were to charge for flour on Account of J & And. M c Gill, it is higher than at this place or Quebec, but as others pay the same, we are satisfied except the five per cent Commission which we think wrong since the flour is on Account of a debt & taken from you to facilitate payment. The Flour was to be addressed to Mons. Giasson and we think at the time of proposing such mode of payments, we mentioned him to you as the Comm's'ner. Our Fleet is but lately arrived at Quebec & God knows when the Goods may reach this place. as there are a great many Packs this year we think your vessel the

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“Saguinau” must get at least one load down, and if she can be back there by 15 Sept at latest we are of opinion she might get a second we are Dear Sir Your very obedt Servents

James & And. M c gill

[ *John Askin* ]

[Source, same as preceding document but p. 26.]

Michilimackinac Aug t . 24 1804.

Dear Sir —As I am just setting out for the Mississippi and I leave a young man to pass the winter at this place finding that you have a quantity of whisky—for sale here—please direct to Patrick Adhemar<sup>41</sup> informing him of the lowest price and enclose an order on Jaques Giasson with whom it is stored for what quantity he may want for which I will be accountable & write you the amount next spring. My best respects to Mrs Askin & family. Wishing the full enjoyment of health, I am Dear Sir, Your very Obd t & very hbl Servant

<sup>41</sup> Probably a son of Toussaint Antoine Adhemar St. Martin, noted *ante*, 9. 159, note 11. Patrick was witness for several marriage contracts (1792–96), and apparently is the trader who proposed to build in 1799 at St. Josephs Island.— Ed.

R. Dickson <sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> An early letter of Robert Dickson, the famous Scotch trader and British partisan. See his biography by Ernest A. Cruikshank in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii, pp. 133–153. It will be a surprise to those knowing his later career to learn that he received an American commission as justice of the peace in August, 1802; see *Executive Journal of Indiana Territory*, cited *ante*, p. 302, note 32.— Ed.

*John Askin Esq. Detroit*

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**1804: UNION OF NORTHWEST COMPANIES**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 86.]

Montreal 8th Decemb. 1804.

*William Park, John Askin, Alexander Harrow*<sup>43</sup> Esquires

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Harrow began his career on the lakes as early as 1777. During the Revolutionary period he commanded on Lake Huron, and as late as 1794 was still in charge of a vessel. Sometime before 1796 he bought a large tract of land on St. Clair River, where he settled near the modern town of Cottrellsville. He rescued a white captive girl from the Indians of the vicinity, and married her. He died before 1821, and his descendants live in St. Clair County, Mich.— Ed.

Gentlemen —A coalition being affected between the N. W. Companies, it becomes necessary that a valuation should be made of the “Nancy,”<sup>44</sup> “Caledonia” and “Charlotte,” with their respective Rigging and Materials whether in use or spare. The transfers will be made the 1st of April. The Parties interested have here jointly agreed, to nominate you to make the Valuations, and we hope that you will be good enough to undertake the Charge. Previous to your fixing said Valuations, it is meant that a Survey should be held upon each of the Vessels by three Carpenters, viz. Messrs Connolly, Baker and Nelson, and a Report made by them to you thereon. In confiding this business to you, we are satisfied that the object of the Interested will be attained, without favor, affection or prejudice to either. There is a Store House, House, and Warff belonging

<sup>44</sup> On the building of the “Nancy,” see letters of John Richardson in Ontario Historical Society *Papers*, vi, pp. 22, 27–32. The schooner was built at Detroit in 1789, of the best materials and plan possible at the time. She was in the service of the X Y Company until the amalgamation in 1804. During the War of 1812–15 she was hired as a transport by

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the government, and destroyed by her crew (Aug. 14, 1814) to prevent her falling into the hands of the Americans.— Ed.

309 to the Owners of the “Nancy” of which we wish for a separate Valuation from the Vessel and her Materials, according to what you may think the fair present worth of said Houses and Wharff.

Excuse the Trouble we hereby give you, and believe us with much esteem Gentlemen  
Your very Humble Servents

Forsyth Richardson & Co .45

45 The firm of Forsyth, Richardson & Co. was one of the most important mercantile houses of Montreal. It was formed in 1790 by John Forsyth and John Richardson, both from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. They soon began to oppose the North West Company as represented by McTavish, McGillevery & Co. After 1795 this became an open war, in which Forsyth, Richardson & Co. represented the interests of the X Y Company. After the union of 1804, both firms continued to conduct the business of the amalgamation until the combination surrendered (1821) to the Hudson's Bay Company. For a sketch of John Richardson, who died in 1831, see *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.— Ed.

P.S. Mr. Duff & Capt. Mills will represent the Interested in the “Nancy,” and Mr. Jas. MacIntosh those in the other Vessels.

Addressed: William Park Esq. Sandwich

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 88.]

Montreal 10 December 1804.

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Dear Askin —I forwarded, the papers, which by the opinion of the Lawyers here was sufficient to prevent Mr Williams<sup>46</sup> from getting possession of the Estate, without paying the Debts

<sup>46</sup> The reference is to John R. Williams of Detroit, who in 1804 attempted to have himself appointed sole administrator of the estate of his father Thomas, who had died in 1785, indebted to several Montreal merchants. John R. Williams was born in 1782 at Detroit. In 1800 he was appointed a cadet in the United States army, but resigned in 1802, to enter business at Detroit. In 1804 he was one of the trustees of the town, and in 1824 served as its first mayor under the charter, being re-elected for the years 1825, 1830, 1844–46. He also served in the militia, being in 1829 a major-general, and in 1832 having the conduct of an expedition towards Chicago. He died in 1854, papers are in the Burton Library, Detroit. — Ed.

<sup>310</sup> first, since which I have not heard from him, or you. as the Winter is come on and you have time to write, hope you will not forget to send me a few lines, for you seem to be lasey, and remind Mr Brush<sup>47</sup> to write what is doing in the business. the best way for Williams is to give security to pay me a fix d sum of money which may be agreed thereon for which I will discharge him from Murray Samon & Co, David White, R. Cruickshanks, & Kay—which is the greatest part of the Creditors. The others he may easily settle with. we have nothing New here. Todd laid up with the Rumatism, the two N. West Companys joined. it is said the New Company have lost £70,000, since their comencing the opposition. it will be some time before they Bring up that sum. Nothing new from Europe. we are all well with best wishes for you & yours remain sincerely ever your old friend

<sup>47</sup> Elijah Brush was one of the earliest Americans to settle at Detroit, having arrived there before 1799, probably from Vermont. He was prominent in the conduct of affairs before and during the War of 1812–15. In that war he served as colonel of the rifle corps, and in that capacity signed the capitulation of Detroit in 1812, although this was much against his

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will. He was a lawyer of repute, county treasurer (1806–13), United States attorney (1811–14), and (1806) mayor of the village by appointment of the governor. He married Adelaide, daughter of John Askin, and left several sons who became prominent in the early years of Detroit and Wisconsin history.— Ed.

A. Henry

I cannot procure a pair of Boots for you in this province—they are made in New England

*John Askin Esq. Detroit*

### 1805: LOCATION OF FUR-TRADE FACTORIES

[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book “B.” Secretary of War to William Davy.]

War Department Dec: 30, 1805.

Sir —I have lately heard of Mr. Peterkin at Wheeling a little below Pittsburg. He was confined for a considerable 311 time at Lancaster by sickness; and was waiting for the water of the Ohio to rise.

I very much doubt the expediency of removing our Factories, from Fort Wayne and Chikago to Michilimackinac. We should by such a measure, deprive the Indians generally, who have become our friends and depend on our supplies, of any means of procuring goods, except by small British traders; and only supply such as are very distant; and who are and would be principally supplied by the British Companies.<sup>48</sup> There are very few Indians in the vicinity of Michilimackinac; the head of Green Bay would be a more eligible situation than that; but, at present, neither would be equal to Chikago. I am very resp. Yr. Obt. Sert.



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48 The factory system of the United States was an attempt to conduct the Indian trade by government agents, and to give the Indians the benefit of fair dealing, and of goods at cost prices. The system was highly recommended by Washington, who in several messages urged its adoption upon the attention of Congress. In 1795 an appropriation of \$50,000 was made for testing the system, and two houses or “factories” were established among the Southern Indians. Nothing more was done until Jefferson induced Congress in 1802 to pass a bill to revive the scheme, and four new “factories” were begun—those at Detroit and at Fort Wayne being for the Northern tribes. In 1804 an additional appropriation was made, in order to extend the system to Louisiana. That same year, the Detroit establishment was discontinued and its effects moved to Chicago, where a military station had just been erected. The factory system was extended to Mackinac in 1808. For further materials on its location and management, see documents and notes *post.*— Ed.

[ Henry Dearborn ]

On margin: Win. Davy

### **1806: WISCONSIN TRADERS AND AGENT**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 53B76. Translated, from the French.]

6 January [1806]

I wish that you may begin the year 1806 with the best of Health, and that you may so Continue until its close. I have 312 received your two letters in due time and I Must compliment you on your exactness. I have not had the advantage of sending you a Reply, not having Known any opportunity since their Arrival, I do not know vet whether I shall find any [opportunity] to send you the present letter. I write you in advance as I am preparing for a journey from which I do not expect to come back until about the 25th of the month. You can arrange matters above not to come to see me until about that time, so that I

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may not be deprived of the pleasure of your visit. I have done my best to keep them from visiting you. I am strongly of the opinion that they should not run the Derouine but I have gained nothing except to retard things a little. I have myself made only one little excursion that has been very unsuccessful. Pichipieca whom I went to see gave me nothing, his son in law nearly a third of the amount of his Credit. Kiotom has made little hunt but he is rather old. M r Kaokitte denies that he had Credit for a cotton shirt. I plan to return there in a little while, I do not know whether I shall succeed any better. I have made some headway with vieu, the gros puant has made a good hunt, he has as yet given me on his Credit only some meat, fortunately however, for without that I should have had very little to eat. I have been very short of provisions up to these Last Days when providence willed that I should meet him at the lodge one day when he had killed eleven Deer of which ten came to me, that gives me hope of not enjoying lent all winter.

You appeared to me In your Last letter uneasy in regard to what you Ought to do and you Ask me to tell you what you should do. I will reply to you as I have above, that you should come here. I do not pretend to take you under my tutelage, moreover, being on the spot you know better than I what you should do, and Moreover when one has done for the best that is what is asked of him, therefore calm yourself, do the best you know how and I am persuaded that all will be well, for the little you can do you always will do better than I, therefore be consoled. I have as yet in my storehouse only 30 lvs of Beaver & 60 deer skins. Adieu, have good courage, try to salt down 313 the meat. I only hope you will live through till spring. Give an occasional dram to the other savages but recommend to Master Antoine not to drink with them as they say he did on the Ste. Croix. Nothing more except the pleasure of being your servant and friend,

Jq. Porlier .49

49 The preceding letter of Jacques Porlier to Louis Grignon needs some explanation. It will be seen by reference to a biographical sketch of him in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 462, that Porlier had acted as tutor to the young Grignons. The accompanying letter is written

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by the elder to the younger man at his wintering post, on the upper Mississippi. Porlier gives Grignon (for whom see *ante*, p. 90, note 27) some friendly advice, the gossip of the trading-post, news of the Indians' movements, etc. The letter incidently epitomizes conditions at some of the small interior wintering places. Porlier's post was located at the mouth of Crow River, near the present Dayton, Minn. It seems to have been located on an island. Lieut. Z. M. Pike stopped there on his descent of the river, four months after the penning of this letter. Pike met Porlier himself while visiting at Dickson's wintering post, some miles farther up. Porlier had wintered there in 1797; but he clearly locates his own post below, where no doubt the present letter was written. The district was a hunting-ground for the Menominee Indians, with whom Porlier and Grignon traded.— Ed.

I shall be charmed if you will keep an exact account of what you receive from our creditors and if you will let me share it. I have just received from the son of la biche 20 deer skins 9 male and 9 female 2 in bad shape.

Addressed: Monsieur L. Grignon On la Riviere a l'eau de vie.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> “La Rivière à l'eau de vie” was Rum River, outlet of Lake Mille Lac. It was first visited by Father Hennepin, when in 1680 he was carried captive to the Sioux village. He calls it in his narrative, St. François River; afterward it was known by many names, of which the most frequent was either River “du Lac” or “Issati;” until Carver gave it (1781) the title of Rum River. The French form of this name was “L'eau de Vie;” see Elliott Coues, *Pike's Expeditions* (N. Y., 1895), p. 356. This is probably the origin of the term “Audevie Creek” that appears on the map accompanying the Biddle edition of the Lewis and Clark Journals, published in 1814; although Rum River likewise appears.

Pike's map places traders' houses on the south side of the Mississippi, opposite the mouth of Rum River. This may have been the site of Louis Grignon's wintering place.— Ed.

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[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book "B". Secretary of War to Nicolas Boilvin.<sup>51</sup> ]

<sup>51</sup> Nicolas Boilvin was a native (1761) of Canada, whither his father had emigrated from France in 1748. The son came to Spanish Louisiana in 1774. In 1784 he was living in Ste. Geneviève District, and in 1797 was entrusted with a diplomatic message to visit Boston, as special agent of the Spanish commissioner, Don Carlos Howard; see Amer. State Papers, Public Lands, iii, p. 592. For this service he received from the Spanish government a grant of land three miles from Grand River; and there married (1802) Hé1ène, daughter of Hyacinthe St. Cyr. A persistent tradition notes that Boilvin's father aided a young American officer in Canada during the Revolution; young Boilvin met the latter in St. Louis, and was recommended by him for the post of Indian agent. The appointment here noted is for 1806. On the death of John Campbell, Boilvin removed to Prairie du Chien, and performed the former's duties until regularly appointed in 1811 as his successor. During the War of 1812–15 Boilvin used his utmost endeavors to maintain the Indians in the American interest. These failing, he was obliged temporarily to retreat to St. Louis. Returning in 1815, he maintained his agency until 1827, when he died while descending the Mississippi. Having been appointed in 1808 justice of the peace of St. Clair County, Indiana, Boilvin was one of the first American officials to exercise his duties at Prairie du Chien.— Ed.

War Deptmt . Ap. 10, 1806.

Sir —You having been appointed an Assistant Indian Agent, will make the Sacque Village, at the Rapids of the Mississippi, above the mouth of the River Lemoin,<sup>52</sup> your principal place

<sup>52</sup> This village was situated on the site of the present town of Montrose, Iowa, and was known as the "Lower Sauk Town." It seems to have been in existence as early as 1781. when Spaniards from St. Louis established a garrison at this place to maintain the Sank

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in their alliance; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, iii, p. 504, xi, p. 169, xii, p. 66. xviii, p. 422. This alliance was maintained, as a rule, throughout the Spanish occupation. See Black Hawk's *Autobiography*, where he speaks of the last time he visited his Spanish father in 1804. British traders, however, were at the Mississippi villages previous to 1801; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix. Occasionally a delegation would seek the British at Amherstburg, Ontario—*Id.*, xviii, p. 460. In 1804, Governor Harrison treated with a small delegation at St. Louis, and secured from them a large grant of land, which was repudiated by the majority of the tribe. In this treaty a promise was made of a government trading house, and part of Pike's duty in 1805 was to choose a site therefor. It was probably in pursuance of this policy that Boilvin was commissioned as sub-agent at this village.— Ed.

315 of residence, but will occasionally visit other Towns add places, particularly the lawe [Iowa] Towns on the Lemoin, the other Sacque Towns, and the Prairie due Chien.

You will make every exertion in your power to conciliate the friendship of the Indians, generally, towards the United States, and to encourage a peaceable and friendly disposition among themselves; to prevent any acts of hostility on red or white people, and to cause proper punishment to be inflicted on such individuals as may be guilty of any hostile acts. You will, by all the means in your power, prevent the use of ardent spirits among the Indians. No Trader should be allowed to sell or dispose of any ardent spirits among them; nor be allowed to have any at their trading stations.

You will, by precept and example, teach the Indians such of the arts of agriculture and domestic manufactures, as your situation will admit. You will give all the aid in your power to Mr. Ewing,<sup>53</sup> who has been placed among the Sacques, for the purpose of instructing them in the arts of husbandry. You should early procure Garden seeds, peach and other fruit stones, and apple seeds. A Garden should be established for the most useful vegetables, and nurseries planted with fruit trees;

<sup>53</sup> William Ewing had been sent out in 1805, apparently by Governor Harrison, to instruct the Sank in agriculture and civilization. He was under the superintendency of Chouteau,

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and had an annual salary of \$500 from the United States. Pike found him, with his interpreter Louis Honoré, on the Illinois side of the Mississippi, about where the Mormon town of Nauvoo was later placed. Pike had small opinion of Ewing's fitness for this task, and General Wilkinson spoke of him as "a young man of innocence, levity, and simplicity, without experience or observation." In 1807, Clark made against him graver charges of incapacity and even of dishonesty; see Coues, *Pike's Expeditions*, i, pp. 15, 222, 293. He appears to have been removed soon after Clark's report.— Ed.

316 for the purpose of distributing the most useful seeds and trees among such of the Chiefs as will take care to cultivate them. You should also instruct them in the art of cultivating and preserving the fruit trees and garden vegetables.

The cultivation of Potatoes ought to be immediately introduced into your own Garden;— and the Indians should be encouraged to cultivate them, as an important article of food, and the substitute for bread.

As soon as practicable, you will be furnished with a Blacksmith to make and mend the hoes and axes, and repair the Guns of the Natives. Ploughs should be introduced, as soon as any of the Chiefs will consent to use them. I am, respectfully, Sir, Yr. Obt. Ser t .

[ Henry Dearborn ]

On margin: Nichl. Boilvin

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 1B15.]

St Louis 7 June 1806.

D r Franks —As the Boats are just going I have only time to write you a few Lines I was much surprised at not Receiving a line from you Since we Parted as you have had repeated opportunities of writting me I would have wrote you last fall but the State of my health was so bad that I could not hold a pen D r . Jack you cant Imagine the trouble I

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have had since I saw you last but it is not Necessary that [I] write to you the particulars as you must have been informed of it all by this time. I had a letter from my Robert<sup>54</sup> including an advice to me that I should never consent to any particular payments being made To any one and I mention it to you hoping that you will agree in opinion with me that all the returns we have will be Equally dividede among our Creditors. God knows all wont be near Enough but it is our duty to act honorably and honestly

54 Probably Robert Aird, mentioned in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 437.— Ed.

317 Toward all men and not get discouraged nor dispirited for one bad Year. the returns from the Missouri are certainly bad but no worse that I expected when I found I was detained at Illinoix to the month of Oct r . I was convinced the season was over for me to do Any thing considerable however I still hope to mend them a little this Summer I intend leaving this in three days to proceed up to the River plate [Platte] where I left the Goods and if I can dispose of them Between this and the month of Aug t I intend comming down To meet the goods and bring down the pack that I may thare make<sup>55</sup> I beg you will not Neglect writting me as often as opportunity offers I beg you will nor get discouraged but keep up your spirits and I think we have a fair Chance of overcoming all our difficulties. Excuse hast and Believe [me] to be D r Jack Your Sincer Friend

55 Aird's difficulties had not all ended; in July he lost a boat, sunk in the Missouri during a serious storm. He therefore determined to continue farther up the river, where (Sept. 3, 1806) he encountered the return expedition of Lewis and Clark; see Thwaites, *Original Journals of Lewis and Clark Expedition* (N. Y., 1905), pp. 374–376. Aird was the first person met by the explorers after their own absence of over two years from the settlements. They eagerly questioned him for news, of which he made a considerable report. He was preparing, so Clark tells us, to form an establishment among the Yankton Sioux, not far from Vermilion River, S. Dak.— Ed.

James Aird

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Addressed: M r Jacob Franks Michillimackinac.

Source, same as preceding document, but 1B17. Translated from the French. Date, about 1806 or 1807.]

My Dear Sir —I flatter myself that you have been long enough alone this summer to profit by it and that you will find yourself in a condition to resist your neighbors handed together against you. You will need to put every thing in shape to resist the storm, and I hope from your activity and your talents that they will not hinder you from making your returns 318 although I recommend to you to hold the price until the Last Moment. That is not to say that you should allow the others to make it. You should conform to the price and when it becomes too low, allow the others to fix it and try and incite them always to Make it lower. But if there is any Means of accord that will be preferable.

I recommend you to try for good peltry, especially deer skins; get as many rats [muskrats] also as possible Do not neglect the fat. Adieu I have good hope for your affairs. Keep well. I am your Servant and Friend

Jq. Porlier, Agent

*Mr. A. Grignon Wisconsin*

### **1807: OPERATIONS OF DUBUQUE**

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1B21. Translated from the French.]

De la prerye da chients 3 June 1807.

*M srs Rocheblève & poollier & Co y*



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Sirs —by Mr Brisebois<sup>56</sup> you will receive twenty eight packs and four ditto for Mr. Berthelotte all together making thirty two packs whose invoice is enclosed, and which you will receive and send on to be sold on the account I owe you

<sup>56</sup> For a brief sketch of Brisbois, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 495, note 29.— Ed.

I have drawn on you for the wages of only one man to whom is due 689 lvs . the rest I have drawn for Mr. Brisebois which I suppose will only be to transfer it from one leaf to another of your books.

Probably you will be astonished at so small returns this year. It is true, but consider the circumstances which have caused this small result. For seeing the fine appearances of last autumn I arranged with 8 men to trap Beaver on the Missourrye <sup>319</sup> I had sent them An Outfit [?] to make their Entrance into the village and entrench it etc. When they had gone ten days journey or had camped ten times they met the Sioux of Des Moines river, and had a little Broil with them. They all gave up the enterprise and came to pass the winter opposite their village eating up their maize since they had no meat to eat. This spring they came to return to me what remained, their guns, traps and Kettles, and I refused to accept them only replying that the loss was total. I told them that these credits remained for another year, which they must make up. But this Misfortune makes me wish to give up trading and I will really quit it when affairs have become settled up.

I pray you not to be apprehensive for the Balance that remains against me—it is true that I am on the wrong side of the account But when I die I have funds that belong to me that will more than equal the Balance owing you. For all the small debts that I owe you I would much prefer to pay in peltry that to draw on you for money.

I inform you that I have waited in vain since I had the honor of receiving a letter from you last Autumn and for information of the inheritance that I charged you to recover. I do not

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know the result, but whatever it may Be I always await with Great impatience whatever you may have to tell me.

I had hoped to go to Makinac this year but an alarm spread among the Savages renders my presence necessary in my locality and I must postpone my journey until next year.

As for the Accounting that you ask me for, I make it the same as to what I owe you as you and every one does. But there are some small differences in regard to the price made on sugar, rum, and powder; and after these are settled, I will adjust the Balance whenever you wish.

Since we have learned from you that I have had my lands confirmed, I await a favorable opportunity to sell a portion of them to satisfy those that I owe, and to have left sufficient to live on the remainder.

I am, awaiting the honor of one of your letters, and the 320 pleasure of seeing you afterward, one who has the honor to be, Messieurs, Your very humble and very affectionate Servant

J. Dubuque 57

57 Julien Dubuque, who seems to have been the first permanent white settler of Iowa, who has left behind him a record of his life, was born in Lower Canada, Jan. 10, 1762. His mother was a Malhiot, and he was probably a kinsman of Victor Malhiot and Jacques Porlier. His inclination led him into the fur-trade, and by 1785 he was at Prairie du Chien, having a trading house on the Iowa side. There he came in contact with the Sauk and Foxes, and learned of the lead mines in their territory which they rudely worked. In 1788 he secured an important concession from these tribesmen to work the mines at what he called the "Spanish diggings," near the site of the city now bearing his name; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xiii, pp. 279–283. In 1796 the Spanish government gave him some kind of title to his lands, which became the basis of a law-suit, that was not terminated until (1853)

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the Iowa supreme court decided against the assignees of Dubuque's title. The inheritance of which he speaks in this letter, is probably a Canadian claim on the estate of some of his relatives. On his voyage of 1805 pike met Dubuque and found him evasive and non-committal concerning his mining interests. He died in 1810, and his grave on a high bluff below Dubuque was long an object of interest to travellers. Contrary to the ordinary belief, he was at the time of his death much indebted to St. Louis and Mackinac traders. Many letters in the manuscript collections of the Wisconsin Historical Library relate to the settlement of his estate. For a considerable biography of Dubuque, see *Annals of Iowa*, 3d series, vol. ii, pp. 329–336.— Ed.

Addressed: Messieurs Mers Rochebleve & porlier Co. Merchants at Mackinac

Endorsed: J Dubuck 1807

Waapalaa, or Playing Fox Fox warrior. From colored lithograph by James Otto Lewis, 1825

Shouunkchunk, or The Black Wolf Winnebago chief. From colored lithograph by James Otto Lewis, 1827

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### 1807: A TYPICAL INVOICE

[Source, same as preceding document. Pressmark: Account Book 22. Translated from the French.]

1807 Returns of Oliva58 Invoice June 8 By different articles of clothing 294 12 By diverse Merchandise 868 12 Advances made to the men 1004 15 3 bearskin coverings 10 30 483 female deerskins 4.10 2173 10 154 male do 6 924 70 fisher 9 630 26 Red Foxes 7 182 62 Martens 6 372 8 Otters 20 160 I made into a sack 18 18 6 lynx 4 24 14 fine bearskins 50 700 6 Common Do 36 216 4 bear cubs 24 96 27 lvs of Beaver 16 432 1466 muskrats 1.10 2199 510 wildcats 3 1530 100 mink 4 400 2 dressed deerskins 10 20 1 " doe skin 12

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12 1 green do 10 10 100 lvs of Suet or Fat 1.10 150 1000 lvs of Sugar .10 500 36 lvs of feathers 1.10 54 13000 921

21

58 Frederic Oliva's father came to Canada from Hesse Cassel, after the English conquest. The son was in the fur-trade during the early years of the nineteenth century, and during the War of 1812–15 acted as government agent at Mackinac. He died in 1819.— Ed.

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### 1807: INFLUENCE OF TECUMSEH'S BROTHER

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 15, p. 50.]

*St. Joseph's* 59 1st Sept. 1807.

59 For this post see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 447, note 68.— Ed.

My Dear Father —I avail myself of the opportunity of Mr. Boucharville<sup>60</sup> who leaves this tomorrow for Makina in order to embark on board of the “Adams” for Detroit. We are continually on the look out for the “Gen l . Hunter” in hopes of hearing from you & all our freinds in your Quarter. This place is destitute of News since the Montreal Canoes have done plying. All the Ottawas from L'arbe au Croche adhere strictly to the Shawney Prophet's<sup>61</sup> advice they do not wear Hats, Drink or Conjure, they intend all to Visit him this Autumn, which will occasion a great scarcity of corn at this post & Makina. The Merchants will suffer by it as they have not provided themselves with that Article Whisky & Rum is a Drug, the Indians do not purchase One Gall n . per month. I saw upwards of 60 of them at one time together spirits, rum & whisky was offered for nothing to them if they would drink but they refused it with disdain. The Chiefs reply to the officer Commanding

<sup>60</sup> Possibly Pierre Amable Boucher, Sieur de Boucherville (1780–1857), who was several times in the upper country; once in 1813, when aide-de-camp to General Prevost. See *Id.*, xii, p. 145.— Ed.

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61 The Shawnee Prophet was a brother of Tecumseh, his name being Tenkwatawa, or Elkwatawa. About 1805 he assumed the character of a prophet, and began a course of religious instruction that spread from the Indians of Florida to those of Saskatchewan. Among the tenets of the new doctrine was abjuration of the white man's dress and the white man's "firewater." This is interesting testimony to his success among the tribes of the North. In 1811, in Tecumseh's absence, the prophet brought about the Battle of Tippecanoe. When defeated, the prophet's influence waned. He did not fight with the British in the War of 1812–15, but removed to Canada with his fellow tribesmen. After Tecumseh's death, the prophet sunk into obscurity, and in 1827 removed with his tribe to the trans-Mississippi, where in 1834 he died. On the popularity of his religious impulse, see James Mooney, "Ghost Dance Religion," in U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, *14th Report*, chaps. iii, iv.— Ed.

323 when he offered them some of his milk was That when they were young & had no teeth to eat they could not get any of their Fathers milk & used to beg constantly for [it] to suck, but now that they were grown up & had good teeth they didn't see why their Father should be so generous with offers of giving them some, especially as they could eat all the provisions he might give them. A number of Old men who knew you at Makina addressed me as the Commissary's son. One of the Chimneys of the House you built at Old Makina fell down. only last Summer. Several large trees have grown upwards of a fathom in Circumference about the Garden. I'm led to believe that they are Pickets which you planted for enclosures which have taken root as they are populars they could not have grown to that size since you left it.62 The following persons arrived this day from Makina on their way to Montreal—Tous t Pothier.63 Campbell, Giasson, David Mitchel Jr.64 Pothier &

62 Old Mackinaw is on the south side of the straits, and near the site of the French and British forts of 1713–80. Askin removed with the troops to Mackinac Island in 1781.— Ed.

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63 Toussaint Pothier was the son of a fur-trader of the same name, who was one of the North West associates. The younger Pothier was born in Montreal in 1770, and entered the company's employ in 1790. He became one of its most prominent supporters, and in 1812 was in charge of the trading post at St. Joseph's Island. There he organized a corps of 160 voyageurs, and aided in the capture of Mackinac from the Americans. He was afterwards major of militia, member of the legislative council, seignior of Ste. Marie de Lanaudière, and died at Montreal Oct. 25, 1845.— Ed.

64 Probably John Campbell, who was a Scotch-Irish trader on the upper Mississippi as early as 1792. It is not yet apparent how, about 1802, he secured the appointment of United States Indian agent at Prairie du Chien. The same date he, together with Robert Dickson, was appointed a Justice of the peace for Indiana Territory. It was said that he performed marriages at Prairie du Chien, his fee being 100 pounds of flour; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ii, pp. 120, 121. Pike met him on his Mississippi voyage in 1805, and speaks favorably of his character. For his death in a duel at Mackinac, see documents *post*.

David Mitchell, Jr., was probably a son of Dr. Mitchell, noted in *Id.*, xviii, p. 496, note 30. The son appears, however, to have had about this time a business house in Montreal.— Ed.

324 that poor simple man J. Bleakly all members or Partners in the South West Co. I intend to send down so much Cedar Bark as will cover my Farm House & Barn as soon as I can [get] them embarked I'm told they make very good Covering far superior to any other bark. I have not seen half a Doz n . of white fish since my arrival this is most barren place I believe in the whole Western Country. Doct Richardson praised this place most on Account of Ducks Rabbits Hares & pheasants but they must have all been eat by him, for I have not cast my eyes on any yet.

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Madelaine and the Children are well. She presents her love to you & my Dear Mother. Please assure Mr & Mrs Barthe of our best wishes for their welfare & family & hope they have not been visited by the fever this year

Accept my sincere wishes for your & my Dear Mothers Health Respects to my Brothers & Sisters. I remain Dear Father yr Dutiful son

*Jno. Askin Jr .65*

65 John Jr. was the eldest son of John Askin, and had a home at Amherstburg. In 1807 he received the appointment of storekeeper and interpreter at St. Joseph's Island. Thence he led the Indians in the capture of Mackinac (1812), and it was largely due to him that no massacre occurred. During the war he was active in furnishing supplies, etc. Later he returned to Amherstburg, where he died about 1823.— Ed.

*John Askin Esquire, Strabane Near Sandwich*

### **1808: WISCONSIN AGENT KILLED IN DUEL**

[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 164.]

St. Josephs 17th Augt. 1808.

My Dear Father —My letter per the “General Hunter” was very short, owing to the Business I had on hand which consisted of Report of Survey etc & my mind wholly taken up with the narrow escape I had of my being supersceded without any reasons assigned for the same. I entertain hopes that my 325 Enemies will let me alone after they have been so compleated frustrated on their operations. Count Chabot will I'm persuaded speak to the Governor in Chief in my behalf, thats to say he will give His Excellency an Account of my Character & Ability. No doubt you have been informed of the unfortunate meeting between Mr. Redford Crawford of the Mississippi & Mr J Campbell Agent of Indian Affairs

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for the United States of the Ouisconsin. it appears a misunderstanding took place over the Bottle, a Challenge took place, they met & were prevented from accomplishing their ends by the Makina Justice but agreed to meet some place along Lake Huron near or about the Detour (the place I cannot ascertain exactly) where poor Campbell received a Mortal Wound. he was brought to this in a Canoe mann'd by American Soldiers, who put him ashore & immediately returned to the American Side. the infortunate man Died the Second day after his arrival & his corps was taken back to Makina, agreeable to a wish he had expressed on his arrival. Redford Crawford & his second immediately went back to Makina, from the place where the Duel took place w h . his Second Robert Dickson. As its probable that Mr Crawford & Dickson will return to the country where this marts family resides, I'm apprehensive that they will meet with a great deal of difficulty & its the general Oppinion that they will loose what property they may take in that Country.

I send Mr. J. & Mrs Barthe Sen r a Mocouts of Sugar addressed to your Care. One for Mr Badishon w h Madelain & my Comp s , a Mocouts marked I P for Mr Peltier<sup>66</sup> & a Bundle. You'll receive One Mocouts Sugar, a Bundle of Mats, & a mocout of dried Huckleberrys which you'll please accept of. The sugar is very clean I believe having received it from a clean woman.

<sup>66</sup> Jacques Peltier (Pelletier) was the father-in-law of John Askin. The family was prominent in early Detroit history, and many of their descendants yet live in the vicinity.— Ed.

Madelaine & the Children are well & all join me in Sincere wishes for your & My Dear Mothers Health & prosperity Our 326 Love to Charles, James, Alex, Alice, Nelly & Brush & Patterson [Pattinson].<sup>67</sup> I remain My Dear Father

<sup>67</sup> These were brothers and sisters of the writer; the last two, brothers-in-law.— Ed.

*Jno. Askin Jr .*



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[P. S.] Comp s to Mr L. Barthe inform him I have not forgot him but cannot procure at present what Stone he wants for pipes.

An Indian by the name of Rayshay mekoquan from Saging a place where the "Weasel" was lost, informes me that he found an Anchor at that place & that Jn. Marice Bobien<sup>68</sup> claimed it as yours & rec d . it, but afterward told the Indians that it was not yours, but it had been lost by Mr. L. Barthe when commanding a Kings Vessel & that it was to be ret'd to the King, this happened three years ago that Beaubien got the Anchor.

<sup>68</sup> Probably Jean Marie Beaubien, a well-known French-Canadian of Detroit, born in 1745. He was a captain of militia, and held several offices in the early city.— *Ed.*

*John Askin Esq. Strabane.*

### 1808: DIRECTIONS FOR FACTORS

[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book "A," p. 231. Instructions to Mathew Irwin and Jos. B. Varnum.<sup>69</sup> ]

<sup>69</sup> For a sketch of the career of Maj. Matthew Irwin, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii, pp. 269, 270, 475. The following document shows that his appointment as factor at Chicago was made two years earlier than there stated.

Joseph Bradley Varnum was a son of the Massachusetts general of that name, who was in the house of representatives (1795–1811), its speaker for two terms, and United States senator (1811–16).

Through his influence, Joseph Varnum was appointed factor at Chicago, and continued there until transferred to Mackinac (1808). In the early tart of 1812 he was at Detroit because of illness, therefore escaped capture at Mackinac. However, he was made a prisoner at Hull's surrender, but was soon afterwards released at Toronto because

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of illness. After recovering health at his Massachusetts home, Varnum was assistant postmaster for the army on the Niagara frontier. After the close of the war, he acted for two years as Astor's agent; but abandoning the fur-trade about 1817, he returned to New York. and became a wholesale dry-goods merchant. There he died in 1867, leaving a considerable estate.— *Ed.*

Office of In: Trade, Geo Town, Wash : 9 Sept. 1808.

*Mathw. Irwin Esq Chicago*

Sir —Having been appointed agent of Indian Trade at Chicago, by direction of the Secretary of war, I now transmit the Instructions which are to govern your conduct.

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1st. The principal object of the Government in these establishments being to secure the Friendship of the Indians in our country in a way the most beneficial to them and the most effectual and economical to the United States, you will avail yourself of every proper means and opportunity of impressing these People favourably toward the Government; let every transaction with them be so conducted as to inspire them with full confidence in its honor Integrity and good faith and in that of its agents; let no imperfect goods be passed on them, without a previous notice of and allowance for such imperfection; and you will strictly require from them and encourage them to the same conduct; all attempts on their part at Fraud, Trick or deception should be discountenanced and prevented if possible, and when such things do happen, they should be reprov'd in the most instructive and dignified manner; you will nevertheless be conciliatory in all your intercourse with the Indians and so demean yourself towards them generally and toward their chiefs in particular as to obtain and preserve their Friendship and to secure their attachment to the United States.

2nd. The prices you put on the Goods you have on sale must necessarily vary according to circumstances, but that which you will consider as the standard advance on the price

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charged in the Invoices received from this Office, will rate from 66# to 100 per centum and this you will consider as the estimate to cover the cost of transportation and to yeild such profit only as will indemnify the establishment for the expences at your Trading House and on the returns made by you to bring round 328 the sales of Furs and peltries without loss, as to the prices allowed to Indians for the Skins you will be governed generally by those to which they have been accustomed and at which you can obtain them without giving them dissatisfaction but after all much must be left to your discretion and prudence so to reduce or raise your prices as compared with the standard advance and with the rate you may be obliged to allow for Skins as to enable us to pay all charges and to avoid sinking money, to enable you to judge of which the rate of sales of the Skins will be occasionally furnished you.

3rd. The goods to be sent you from time to time are intended for sale to the Indians (and it is the express direction of the secretary of war that) no white persons are to be considered as having any right to be furnished with Factory Goods and except in very particular and pressing cases, no sales should be made to white persons of any description whatsoever and in no case but for prompt pay and at an advance of 10 per cent on the Indian Prices and you will be held accountable for the payment of all articles sold to white People on credit excepting (to the U. S. Army officers, and soldiers, under direction, or orders for the officers).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The portion in parentheses was inserted in the original draft, in pencil.— Ed.

Credits may however be given to Principal chiefs of good character. If a professed white Trader wants goods you are not to sell him at any price any article you may possibly be in want of for the Indians If you have a surplus of others you may useing great caution sell them but then only at an advance of 10 per cent on the current prices.

4th. A suitable guard will be furnished you (by order of the Secretary of war) by the Officer commanding the Garrison near you, you will however be absent as little as possible from the Store, an Interpreter when necessary will be furnished you and it is of importance

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that he should be a person of sober discreet and temperate habits and attached to the Interests of the United States.

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5th. You are restricted by Law from carrying on any Trade commerce or Barter on your account or any other, except for the United States as you will observe by the Law establishing Indian Trading Houses *passed on the 21st. April 1806.*<sup>71</sup>

71 The fourth and fifth articles of instruction are crossed through, as if for erasure.— Ed.

6th. The sale of ardent spirits is most strictly prohibited.

7th. You will furnish me once a year with your list of articles wanted for the succeeding year and as early in the season as possible and not later than the 1st. of Octr. it being of great advantage to have ample time to make purchases let your lists be full clear and explicit in description as to each article and always bear in mind that good supplies must depend upon adequate remittances.

8th. You will take the greatest possible care to ascertain and examine the quality of the Furs and Peltries you receive to see that their quality is fairly proportioned to the price allowed, that their condition is good to preserve them with attention while in your possession and to send them off in good order carefully and safely packed and so time their departure as that they arrive early in Spring or late in Fall that by avoiding the warm weather on the route they may be saved from the worm. particularly you are to be watchfull to avoid the imposition of private Traders who may attempt to make instruments of the Indians or otherwise to put off on you bad Skins and to get hold of your goods for the purposes of their Trade take<sup>72</sup>

72 All of the remainder of this paragraph was crossed out in the original draft.— Ed.

in as small a proportion of Deer Skins as you can with propriety do and forward whatever you receive as returns (Cash, Notes and drafts excepted) to Genl. Peter Gansevoost Jr.

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military agent for the United States at Albany, forward to me the Invoices respectively as you send of the articles to Albany and a duplicate to him.

9th. All remittances of Bills notes or Cash must be made to me and under my direction and you are to correspond with take orders en all commercial operations from and keep all your 330 accounts with me If any communication of a civil or Political nature be necessary you will make them separately and in a direct correspondence with the Secretary of War. If any of the Officers of Government who are well known to you want Cash you may take their drafts for it on any of the Departments at the Seat of Government.

10th. You will keep correct accounts of every transaction in a Day Book, Journal, and Ledger and Cash Book, In they Day Book every thing must be recorded you will also keep an Invoice Book and a Letter Book, you will render me quarter yearly accounts of all money goods and property whatsoever which shall be transmitted you or which shall come into your hands and you shall transmit duplicates of your accot. to the Secretary of the Treasury of the, U. S. these accounts you will make up to the last days Inclusively of March, June, Septr. and December in each year they will comprise abstracts of your acct. Books balanced up to and includeing those days respectively as to Sales recpts. expenditures and stock on hand, the stock on hand you will detail clearly and accurately by Inventory this point as to makeing up to the given day and transmitting regularly your accounts and Inventory is so essential that it must not be dispensed with in any Instance and you must be as early as possible after the time to which made up in sending them off.

Assureing you of my prompt attention to all your communications and with best wishes for the success of your Trading House,<sup>73</sup> I am very Respectfully

<sup>73</sup> In original, this final paragraph was crossed out with pencil.— Ed.

[ John Mason ] Supr. In: Tr<sup>74</sup>

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74 John Mason was the fourth son of George Mason of Gunston Hall. Born in 1766, John entered the mercantile profession and lived some years at Bordeaux, France. After his father's death, he settled on his estate near Georgetown and in 1806 was appointed superintendent of Indian Trade, according to the law of that year authorizing such an appointment. During the War of 1812–15 he was commissary-general of prisoners; hence the courtesy title, "General" Mason, by which he was usually known. He continued to superintend the Indian trade until 1816, being then replaced by Thomas L. McKenney. The remainder of his long life was spent on his estates. He lived in his later years at "Clermont," in Fairfax County, where he died in 1849. His son James was Confederate commissioner to England in 1861; his daughter was the mother of Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. On taking office, McKenney commented on the accuracy and the systematic care which his predecessor had used in the business of the department.— Ed .

Endorsed: A copy of the foregoing was sent to Jos: B. Varnum Esq at Michilimackinac  
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[Source, same as preceding document, but p. 224.]

Office of Indian Trade George Town (Washington)

10th. Septemr. 1808.

*Joseph B Varnum Esqr. Agent for the United States at Michilimackinac*

Sir —It having been determined to establish a Factory for Indian Trade at Michilimackinac, I have the pleasure to inform you, that you have been appointed by the Secretary of War to take charge of that establishment and Matthew Irwin Esqr. of Philadelphia who will hand this and other dispatches for you, has been appointed to succeed you at Chicago The absence of the Secretary from the Seat of Government at this time prevents the issuing

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of your Commission, on his return, next month, it will be forwarded you, when a new Bond and oath of Office from you will be required—of this I shall write you in due time.

I hand you under cover an Invoice of 172 Packages [of] Goods intended for the new trading house at Mackinac Post including a sett of Books and stationary for the use of the Factory, the assortment and qualities have been obtained from a person well skilled in the Trade of that part of the Country, and on whose judgment and information we had reason to believe dependence could be placed—so that I trust they will be found to answer well, and as the amount is considerable, I flatter myself you will be able to open the New establishment to considerable advantage. When the goods are opened and examined, and you shall have made yourself acquainted with the fashion and quality of the Articles in demand 332 in that quarter by the Indians, you will be pleased [to] remark particularly on such (if any) as may not suit—and describe accurately which will, and where description cannot well carry a correct idea of the thing in question send us Samples.

I have directed Mr. Irwin who has charge of these goods to store them at Mackinac safely and subject to your order as he passes that place, there to await your arrival which I hope will be very soon after he reaches Chicago, as it is extremely desirable that you should be located at Mackinac and have the new Establishment opened before winter sets in, for which I calculate there is yet full time—if Mr. Irwin should be fortunate to meet with no unforeseen delay, I have urged on him every possible exertion to reach you quickly and must beg on your part, that nothing be left undone to Inventory and give up to him all the Goods and other public property at the Factory at Chicago including those Goods now Invoiced for that place forwarded by Mr. Irwin and addressed to you, and to repair to Mackinac and open the New Trading House there with the least possible loss of time. Should it however unfortunately happen, that he does not get to Chicago in time as to Frost, for you to repair safely to your destined station—in that case, and in that case only, you will continue at Chicago 'till the Spring, as principal, and Mr. Irwin will, act there as your assistant, and he is instructed accordingly, and you will give up to him the Factory at Chicago and remove to Mackinac as early in Spring as practicable. it was to provide

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against such a possible state of things that in writing to [you] yesterday as agent at Chicago, I addressed the present Invoice of Goods for that place to you. A dwelling House and Stores at Mackinac suitable for the intended Factory have been rented as long ago as December last, by the Secretary of War, of a Mr. Campbell, as you will see by the inclosed Letters (Copies) which passed between them on 16th. December, Certified from the War Office and which I hope will be found sufficient to enable you to get immediate possession. As I presume Mr. Campbell must immediately after the engagement have directed his 333 agent there to deliver the Stores to the United States Factor when called for. In the absence of the Secretary, I have annexed an order for them which I presume will be sufficient, in case of a necessity of Communicating with him. Mr. Campbell resides at Prairie des Cheins on the upper Mississippi and has lately been appointed Indian Agent there for the United States. The rent is to be paid by you from time to time, at the stipulated rate, say \$150 p r an: when it is to commence must depend on circumstances,—if Mr. Campbell has held the house empty to our Order, it ought to be paid from the time it was so ready to be delivered to us; otherwise only from the time you get possession.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> It is evident that the authorities at Washington had not yet learned of the death of Campbell, as mentioned *ante*, p. 325.— Ed.

Referring for all that relates to your accounts and Agency at Chicago to my Letter of yesterday, I am Sir very respectfully Your Mo obt Servt

J. M. Supr. Ind. Trade.

P. S. In the present Invoice there are only 171 Packages, one to go from New York and some additional charges will be stated in my next

J M

### 1809: MICHILIMACKINAC FACTORY



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[Source, same as preceding document, but Letter Book "B", p. 434.]

War Department 26 April 1809.

Sir —Your letter of the 18th. of February last addressed to my predecessor in office has been received. I have also been favored by Genl. Mason with a perusal of your letter to him under date of the 12th. of March.

Having maturely considered the subject, it is thought best, both as it respects yourself and the public Interest that you should be charged with the Factory at Michilimacinac; to which place you will immediately repair on the Arrival of Mr. Irwin at Chicago, to whom you will make over all the public property 334 at that Place, now under your direction, with such Advice as may be useful to him in conducting the business as your Successor.

Should the building at Michilimacinac mentioned in your Letter to Genl Mason, appear on examination to be well calculated for a public Store, you will please to consult with the Officer commanding at that Post, on his relinquishing of it, for some other Situation, which it is hoped may be procured, that will equally well accommodate him. I am etc.

[ William Eustis ]

Addressed: J. B. Varnum, Jr.

### **1809: THE MACKINAC COMPANY**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library: Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 60B27.]

Know all Men by these presents that we James McGill, Francis Desrivieres and Thomas Blackwood, trading under the Firm of James & And w M c Gill & Co. of Montreal Merchants,<sup>76</sup> have made, constituted & ordained, and by these presents do make, constitute & ordain Jacques Porlier, and Jean Baptiste Berthelot, jointly & severally, our true & lawful Attornies for the special purpose of appearing for & representing us, in the

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General Council or Councils to be held at St Josephs or elsewhere, conformable to the Articles of Agreement of the Michillimakinac Company, and in every such Council or Councils for us, and in our name to vote & give their opinion for us, as fully & amply as if we were personally Present, hereby ratifying & approving of whatever our Said Attornies may do in the premises. And this Power shall be in force and continue until the tenth day of April now next ensuing and no longer.

In Witness whereof we have set our Hands & Seals at Montreal

76 Andrew McGill died in 1805. For James McGill, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 326. François Desrivières was son of an early trader of that name, and a stepson of James McGill. Thomas Blackwood was a well-known Montreal merchant, who in 1812 was officer in the local militia and in 1821 one of the founders of the General Hospital.— Ed.

335 this 15 th day of May in the Year of our Lord 1809. At Montreal aforesaid where no Stamps are used

James M c Gill [Seal]

Fran c . Desrivieres [Seal]

Tho. Blackwood [Seal]

Signed Sealed and delivered before John Grant Junior;

Peter Harkness

### **1809: HATTERS' FURS FROM FACTORIES**

[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book B, p. 63. Extract from a letter of John Mason Supt. to Gen. Henry Dearborn, Boston, dated Georgetown, Oct. 9, 1809.]

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I am sorry to say that so miserable has been the trafic of our Factories on the lakes for the last year, that they furnish no Hatters furs worth dividing—or which it would be proper to send further for a market than New York the place where they are first landed on the Sea Board—the whole quantity (of the kinds you mention as wanting in Boston) not exceeding about 10,000 Racoon skins, 3,000 muskrat skins and 40 or 50 of Beaver & no old Coat—the Mackinac Factory has not yet got into operation

\* \* \* \* \*

The factors complain of the hard winter and give this as a reason why the Indians hunted much less than usual—should we be more fortunate another season on the lakes as I trust with the assistance of the Michilimackinac Factory we shall—the applications from the Boston Hatters shall not be forgotten. I shall take pleasure in recommending that a trial be made of some of the Furs in that market.

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### **1810: AMERICANS ABSORB MONTREAL FUR-TRADE**

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 16, p. 50.]

Montreal 26 February 1810.

My Dear Old Friend —I received a letter from you last fall and wrote to you the same time which is very extraordinary that you did not recieve it. there is no safty in writing otherwise than by post, as the Boatmen is very careless. I also this day had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 13th January and am Happy to find that you and yours are in good Health, which is one of the greatest blessings Providence can bestow on us poor Mortals, also that you are exempt from the many troubles, vexations, and disapointments attending those who are in commerce, for my part I have had a severe Bileous Fever which I got in Lake Champlain, which was near puting an end to our friendly intercourse, however it pleased providence to Lengthen out my span, for sometime longer, I wish when it was in my power

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to have retired from active live to have done as you did, when we are young we do not feel the effects of misfortune, so much as when we grow old, however when I look arround I find many worse than myself which is a consolation. our old friend Todd is in New York and has been there all winter, which has been a loss to our Society, especially to me, he being the only old friend, except Mr. Frobisher, who has not changed their dispositions, some from geting rich others from having obtain'd places— & has raised them in their own imagination above their old acquaintance, and I am sorry to say your friend McGill is one of that number. the poplation of this city within this two years exceeds all imagination, the whole trade of the Country is carried on by Americans, and their agents, and I expect the Indian Trade will fall into their Hands, as Mr Astore offerd to purchase out the Makenau Co. he has a Charter from Congress to an exclusive right to the Indian Trade, and I understand he is to be conected with the N W Company to make settlements on the North West coast of America, to communicate with the inland N W Trade. Mr 337 MGillavray is now in New York & Mr Richardson on that business.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> This refers to Astor's plans for the founding of Astoria. In 1808 he obtained a charter for the American Fur Company and in 1810 bought out the Mackinac Company, uniting it with the former and denominating it South West Company. In his plans for the Pacific trade, Astor made overtures to the North West partners, which were later rejected. Whereupon he managed the company on his own account—a measure that ultimately led to the failure of the enterprise.— Ed.

I hope your reading this Letter will not give you the blues, it is a bad rainy day that has affected my spirrits, the next I hope will be better, we have had a disagreeable winter, more sickness in the Country & Town than ever was known. I have not heard from Mr Brush this 12 Months. let me know whether he is dead, or no. Mrs. Henry and my Daughter are all I have of my family, two of my boys in the N West, one on board of a Man of Warr. my paper is almost full therefore I must dose (is it possible we will never meet in

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this world) Mrs Henry Etc., Join in wishing you & Mrs Askin every Happiness this world can give remain Dear Askin your old friend

Alexander Henry

*John Askin Esquire, Strabane Detroit*

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 1B34.]

Montreal , June 8, 1810.

*Mr. Jacques Perrier*

Sir —This will be delivered by Mess rs . Gillespie<sup>78</sup> and Pothier, who carry up ample powers for the purchase for the whole of the Interest of the Wintering Partners in the Concerns of the late Mich a . Co., or for winding up the business according to the original agreement.

<sup>78</sup> George Gillespie, a prominent Montreal merchant who had in 1798 been in charge of the house of the North West Company at St. Joseph's. In 1808 he went to Washington to remonstrate against the embargo.— Ed. 22

Notwithstanding the favorable Sales of Deer & Beaver, we <sup>22</sup> 338 do not see that a loss on the whole business of the Comp y can be avoided, unless the Returns of this year should be great, and the Sales very favorable.

Whatsoever you may determine upon in respect to a continuance of your own Interest in the present years Outfit or not, we hope that you will alike be disposed to give your best aid towards making the most of matters for those who may run the risk, whosoever they may be; because if you *sell out* , a fair consideration for your services will be allowed. And even if what the Attornies of the four Houses may offer you in such case should be considered by you too small, we would readily credit to the account of your late Firm or

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your part of it, such Sum as would make up the difference between your ideas of the allowance for services *if you sell out* , and what the said Attornies may offer you. The Sales MK [Mackinac] in London have been.

Deer Skins Gro: average about 7 sh. 2 d per skin

Beaver " " 13 " per skin

Otter " " 16 " 3 d per skin

Fisher " " 7 " per skin

33 Bear " " 20 " " "

21 Swanskins " " 30 " " "

The Racoons & Minks are still unsold We remain, Sir, Your most Obed t Servants

Forsyth Richardson & Co .

Endorsed by Porlier, in French: 1810 Letter of Mr. Richardson mentioning the dissolution of the Company of MK a. and the compensation allowed to the proprietors of the interior.

### **1811: EMBARGO AFFECTS FUR-TRADE**

[MS. in Pension Office, Washington. Pressmark: Indian Office Letter Book "C", p. 75. Circular Letter to Indian agents.]

War Department April 15th. 1811.

Sir —It is possible (indeed it has been intimated) that in consequence of the operation of the late Law prohibiting the 339 importation into the United States of British Goods,79 the British Agents and Traders with the Indians, may attempt to excite in their minds,

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prejudices and hostile dispositions towards the United States, insinuating, that as the British Goods intended for their trade, will not be permitted to enter and pass the American posts on the Western Frontier, this act, which has been dictated as a measure of general policy in relation to Great Britain, was intended as an act of hostility against the Indians. You will be on your guard; and use all proper means to anticipate and frustrate any such attempts: Explaining to the chiefs of the several Tribes as occasion may offer, that the Government of the U. S. has been compelled by long continued injuries and violations of their rights on the part of Great Britain for which no satisfaction or redress has been had, to interdict their trade rather than make war against them: That as the White people have it is expected the Red people will, submit to an inconvenience which it is in the power of Great Britain to terminate, by returning to a sense of right and pursuing a course of Justice.

79 The non-importation act, passed by Congress March 2, 1811, after a period in Which the embargo had been temporarily suspended.— Ed.

In resisting such endeavours and conciliating the disposition of the Indians, your vigilance and exertions are expected: And in case it should become necessary to extend indulgencies and to make presents exceeding the usual allowance, your discretion is confided in, to act as circumstances may require.

The Agents at the Several factories will receive instructions on the Subject, from the Superintendent of Indian trade. Respectfully,

[ William Eustis ]

Addressed: Gov Wm. Hull, Gen. Wm. Clark, Charles Jouett, Erastus Granger, John Johnston<sup>80</sup> , Nichs. Boilvin, J. B. Varnum, Ind. Agents.

80 As governor of Michigan Territory, William Hull was *ipso facto* Indian agent.

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Gen. William Clark at St. Louis had been since 1807 Indian agent for Louisiana, which embraced all of the purchase, except that afterwards erected into the state of Louisiana.

Charles Jouett was of Virginia birth (1772). In 1802 he was chosen Indian agent at Detroit, and three years later was removed to Chicago. In 1811 he resigned his agency and settled in Kentucky, whence In 1815 he was again summoned to occupy the Chicago agency. After his resignation from this office he was a judge (1819–20) in Arkansas Territory, and in 1834 died at Lexington, Ky.

Erastus Granger was brother of Gideon, postmaster-general in Jefferson's cabinet. Erastus was agent for the Six Nations, with headquarters at Buffalo, where he died in 1823.

John Johnston (1775–1861) was Indian agent at Fort Wayne until 1812, when he removed to Upper Piqua, where he kept his agency until 1829.— Ed.

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### **1811: WISCONSIN CARGO CLEARED**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 60B38.]

District of Michilimackinac Port of Michilimackinac

These are to certify that Lewis Grignon Commander of a Barge bound to Green Bay and having on board the following Cargo, Viz. Five Barrel Sundries, two Cases Merchandize, two bales merchandize, two kegs Pork & Gum, Four Pots, One keg powder, three bags Corn, together with the necessary Sea Stores for the Voyage, Hath here entered and cleared his said barge as the law directs

Given under my hand and Seal of office this 18 th day July A. D. 1811.



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[Seal] Samuel Abbott 81 Collector

81 For Abbott see Wis. Hist. Colls., xviii, p. 512, note 46.— Ed.

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### 1811: TRADERS PURCHASE FROM FACTOR

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1A158.]

*Messrs. Porlier & Bartlet [Berthelot] to the U. S. Factory M k*

Dr.

2 Pieces stroud 35.00 70.00 15½ yards Crimson Molton 75 11.62½ 18 Pairs Blankets 3½  
Point 9.00 62.00 20 do do 3 do 8.00 160.00 12 do do 2½ do 6.30 75.00 8 do do 2 do 4.00  
12.00 19 do do 1½ do 3.00 57.00 6 Calico Shirts 2.00 12.00 1 Doz: Papercase Looking  
Glasses 1.50 4 do Scalping Knives 2.00 8.00 4 Padlocks 62½ 2.50 1 Gross Gartering  
3.50 2½ Pounds Worstead 2.50 5.62½ 30½ do Vermillion 2.25 69.19 4 do Cotton wick 1.00  
4.00 800 Gun flints 1.00 8.00 6 small axes 75 4.50 6 Hoes 75 4.50 75 Pounds Powder  
1.00 75.00 10 Pairs Blankets 3½ Pt. 90.00 10 do do 1½ " 30.00 5 do do 2 " 10.00 6 Hoes  
4.50 891.04 Recd Wm. Howards Draft for 612.76 Gold 234.24# Paper 40.00 Silver 4.05#  
\$891.04

J. B. Varnum U. S. Factor.

Endorsed: Invoice of August 14, 1811, With receipt.

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### 1811: AVOIDANCE OF EMBARGO

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 456, p. 194.]

St. Josephs 25th Augt. 1811.

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My Dear Father —Tho I have not any of your favors before me to answer yet cannot let this opportunity slip without letting you know that we are all well. The constant arrival of Canoes for some days past from Michilimakinac and Boats from Montreal *via* the Lakes has kept the place alive The non-importation act will effect the S. W. Furr Company much for their Goods must remain here this winter unsold. Messrs Gillispie, Pothier, Berthelet and many others are expected in tomorrow they are to remain some time in hopes that the Act will be repealed. Mr. Robert Dickson intends going to Queenston *via* York from Queenston to Buffaloe from B. to Fort Pitt down the Ohio to the Mississippi then up the last mentioned river to the head thereof amongst the Siouxs. Johnney has made his agreements w t . Mr Lewis Crawford<sup>82</sup> and is to winter at Lake de Flambeaux, Superior, he only gets £50 Hf. (tho little) its better than to be Idle. Madelaine, John & the children join me best wishes for your & my Dear Mothers Health & Happiness & our Love to My Brothers & Sisters & am My Dear Father Your dutiful Son

<sup>82</sup> Lewis Crawford was a member of the North West Company. In 1812 he headed a body of Canadian volunteers engaged in the capture of Mackinac. In 1814 he was on the island when the Americana landed, and aided in their repulse. His services having been commended by the British authorities, he was in 1816 recommended for a magistracy, but by that time had left the country. He was a brother of Redford Crawford, who, as related *ante*. p. 325, killed John Campbell in a duel.— Ed.

Jno Askin Jr .

Have the goodness to tell my D r mother that I have not forgot her about the Buffaloe Skin

*John Askin Esquire Strabane*

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### 1812: FUR-TRADE ENGAGEMENT

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[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 56B30. Translated from the French.]

Before the undersigned Notaries residing in the town of Montreal,<sup>83</sup> in the Province of Lower Canada appeared [Charles S t . Antoine dit Vacher of Maskinonge] who voluntarily is engaged and by these presents engages himself to the Company of Michilimackinac, [T. Pothier Montreal agent] here present and accepting, to depart at their first requisition in the capacity of middleman in one of their Canoes or Batteaux, in order to make the voyage in ascending and also to winter [three] years in the dependences of St. Joseph Island, Michilimackinac, Mississippi and Missouri [and to descend after the said three years]. Also to take good and due Care on the route and while at the said place of the Merchandise, Provisions, Peltries, Utensils and all things necessary for the voyage; to serve, obey, and faithfully execute all that the said Sieurs his Bourgeois or all others representing them to whom they may transfer the present engagement, shall lawfully and honestly order him to do; without trading on his own account, nor absenting himself from nor leaving the said service, under the penalties imposed by the Ordinances, and the loss of his wages. This engagement thus made, for and in consideration of the sum of [twelve Hundred] livres or shillings ancient currency of this province, that they promise and oblige themselves to release and pay to the said [Engagé] one month after his return to this town; and at the beginning to furnish him one 3 point Blanket, 3 ells of cotton, one pair of shoes and one collar, and to pay in advance [forty eight livres and he shall also receive on his Departure twenty four livres currency. Joseph St Antoine de Vacher his uncle of the said town of Maskinongé enters into Bond for the said Engagé. He agrees to contribute one

<sup>83</sup> The following engagement is printed in French, with blanks for filling in; the words within the brackets are written. This is a typical engagement contract for Canadian voyageurs—one of the forms used for many years with but slight variation.— Ed.

<sup>344</sup> percent of his wages for the fund for voyageurs; the said bourgeois will be bound to feed the said engagé in such places as he may be during the present engagement, only

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with Indian corn or such other food as there is ordinarily to be found among the savages. For thus &c. promising &c. obliging &c. renouncing &c. Done and passed at the said Montreal in the Notary's Office in the year one thousand eight hundred and [Twelve] the [fourteenth of March] at noon; and they have signed with the exception of the said engagé who, having declared on being asked that he does not know how, made his usual mark after having had read to him [what is in the draft of these presents]

L s Chaboillez

Endorsed: Engagement of Charles St. Antoine dit Vacher 1200 lvs for three years.

### 1812–13: WISCONSIN TRADE AGREEMENTS

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1B51. Translated from the French.]

St. Joseph July 4, 1812.

*Robert Dickson Esquire*

As I see that it is impossible to terminate our business because of the sale of Peltries and other critical circumstances, I am obliged to yield to you my part of all Peltries, merchandise, Debts belonging to us under the following conditions, namely 1 st that you will exonerate me from my proportion of the debt owed by us to the S. W. Company by M rs . Potbier. 2 nd that you will pay me in the month of May next the sum of two thousand four hundred livres ancient Quebec currency. 3 d that you will discharge my individual account in the books, including the charges that have been made and shall be made in the following accounts against me, namely S. W. Company at Prairie du Chien for M r Oliva, Nich s Jarrot,<sup>84</sup> Fr s . Bouthellier,

<sup>84</sup> Nicolas Jarrot was a native of France, whence he emigrated to America during the early part of the Revolution. Landing at Baltivarious parts of the United States, finally settling 1794 at Cahokia. There he embarked in the fur-trade on the upper in Mississippi,

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and had large dealings at Prairie du Chien, where Pike found him in 1806. During the War of 1812–15, Jarrot was pro American and aided Boilvin in rallying the inhabitants for the United States; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xi, pp. 290, 295. He made his home in Cahokia, where he had a fine house and was magistrate for St. Clair County. He died there in 1823, leaving a large fortune.— Ed.

345 M. Brisbois & L t . Grignon,<sup>85</sup> as well as assuring me that you will remit the money due to Nich s Jarrot, either in merchandize or otherwise according to his bargain with us, as I have given him my note, also to retire my notes at Michillimakinac in the hands of Ja s . Reid and Michael Donsman,<sup>86</sup> as they appear on our books, also to liquidate all small Accounts that I may have made on our Account that have escaped my memory, also to give me the Barge or boat on which I came to Makinac. Moreover I obligate myself to arrange the accounts of the men at your demand. I am your obedient Servant

<sup>85</sup> For François Bouthillier see *ante*, p. 104, note 41. Lieutenant Grignon is Louis Grignon.— Ed.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Dousman is sketched in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 506, note 42.— Ed.

Jo s Rolette

St Joseph July 6, 1812. I accept the above Conditions.

R. Dickson & Co .

[Source, same as preceding document, but 2A21.]

*Franks and Co. Dr. To Alexis Reaume.*<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Alexis Reaume may have been a nephew of Judge Charles Resume of Green Bay. He carried on business between Detroit and Mackinac, and is said to have been the first to arrive at the latter place in 1815, with news of the peace.— Ed.

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To account Render[ed] 83

To Mr. John Law accot' 130

To Mr. T: Anderson 50

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Credit—By 190 musrat in Full of all demand To This day July 10th 1813

Alexis Reaume

Endorsed: Paid A. Reyaume 263 10th July 1813.

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[Source, same as preceding document, but 2B6.]

Sandwich 18 Aug t 1813.

Dear Sir —M r . Franks arrived here two days ago & is in good health. the Bearer of this is Thomas<sup>88</sup> who has conducted himself with the greatest propriety.

<sup>88</sup> This was Tomah, the Menominee chief, for whom see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, i, pp, 53–58; iii, pp. 269–283; xviii, p. 446, note 65. Tomah was then returning from the sieges of Forts Meigs and Stephenson.— Ed.

You will please cloathe his Wife & Children & I will return you the goods this Fall—it is also M r . Frank's wish that you should do so. I will write you more fully. Yours sincerely

R. Dickson

N. B. M r Franks tell you to give [Thomas some] Flour.

J. Franks

Addressed: M r . John Lawe, La Baye

**1813: AMERICAN FUR COMPANY ON THE GREAT LAKES**

[Transcripts in Burton Library, Detroit. Letter Book of Ramsay Crooks.]

Buffalo 21st. October, 1813.

*John Jacob Astor ,*

After a very disagreeable ride I reached this place the night before last in good health, since when I have made every enquiry respecting the prosecution of my journey and find I must either go on horseback by way of Presque Isle or on board the Schooner "Chippewa" that was stranded a little below this place a few days ago. By land it will be a trip of ten or twelve days and an expense of about \$100—while by water the charges will be comparatively trifling—but the very advanced state of the season and the uncertainty of the Vessels being soon repaired & got off are great objections to trusting this mode of conveyance however I shall see both the Schooner and Captain to-morrow & if convinced that she will sail in a few days I shall engage my passage in her. Since the evacuation

Ramsay Crooks From oil portrait by E. Saintain, in possession of Wisconsin Historical Society

347 of Malden<sup>89</sup> many of those Who fled from Detroit during the reign of Terror have returned, and among the others a Mr. Ten Eyck<sup>90</sup> who I understand has about ninety Packs of Skins he had concealed previous to the trouble—he left this village sometime ago but whether with the intention of bringing his property here immediately it is impossible to ascertain. I shall endeavor to meet him somewhere. A Mr. William Baird of this place will act as our agent here, he is industrious and attentive and is allowed to be a man of the strictest integrity. You will consequently address any Communication you may make me

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to his care to-morrow will determine when and in what manner I shall leave Buffalo with which you shall be made acquainted by next mail. I am &c

89 Malden was evacuated by General Proctor Sept. 27, 1813, on the approach of General Harrison. Although Proctor and his van had left some days previous, the rear-guard had only departed an hour before the victorious Americans entered the town, where the burned remains of Fort Malden and its several storehouses were yet smoldering.— Ed.

90 Conrad Ten Eyck was a native of Albany, where he was born in 1782. When nineteen years of age he came to Detroit and engaged in mercantile business, having for a partner his brother Jeremiah. Their establishment was destroyed by the fire of 1805, but they began anew only to be banished from the place in 1812 by Proctor. After his return, Ten Eyck became a prominent citizen; he was treasurer of Wayne County (1816–25), trustee of the village (1818), and member of the militia (1836–38). Being an active Democrat, he was appointed federal marshal by Van Buren. Having purchased a large farm west of the city he removed thereto, and kept a tavern, which became well known to west-bound emigrants. There he died in 1847.— Ed.

[ Ramsay Crooks ]91

91 Ramsay Crooks was a native (1787) of Greenock, Scotland. Several members of his family migrated in 1792 to America and settled on the Canadian side of Niagara River. Thence young Crooks, at the age of sixteen, came West with Robert Dickson and was in Wisconsin as early as 1806. The next year he left the North West Company, and at St. Louis formed a partnership with one of Wayne's veterans, Robert McClellan, for a fur-trading expedition up the Missouri. This, however, was frustrated by the hostility of the Teton Sioux. In 1811 Crooks joined the Pacific Fur Company, and was one of the overland Astorian expedition headed by Wilson Hunt. In that journey Crooks endured almost incredible hardships, eventually reaching Astoria May 12, 1812, and starting homeward the 28th of June following. The return journey was accomplished with nearly as great



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difficulties as the outward, the party being attacked and robbed by hostile Indians; after wintering on the upper waters of the Platte, they reached St. Louis in April, 1813. There Crooks first heard of the declaration of war between England and the United States. He at once proceeded to New York, whence he was sent, as the accompanying documents show, to aid Astor in his fur-trade along the Great Lakes. Crooks remained in Astor's employ until, in 1817, he was made a partner in the American Fur Company, and each year made a visit to Mackinac and the upper country in the interests of that corporation. In 1834, upon Astor's retirement, Crooks became its president. He died at New York in 1859, leaving a reputation for business integrity. He was interested in the founding of the Wisconsin Historical Society, and presented his portrait to its museum; see article thereon in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, iv, pp. 95–102.— Ed.

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New York 1 Nov. 1813.

Dear Sir —I have just now your letter of 21 Oct. and am glad to see you have got so far. I hope you will get the skins of teneyck as well as all others particularly Raccoon, Beaver, Martin and Mink which are all much wanted here, if you are obliged to give a little more than the price stated never mind it.

I request you again give no information whatsoever to any person as to our Columbia River Buisness. the "Beaver" arrived at Canton.

Yours J. J. A[stor]

P. S. Send some of the furrs as soon as you can that we may have the best of the market

Buffalo 1 st . Decem. 1813.

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Dear Sir —On the 17 th Ultó., I had the pleasure of enclosing you a list of Indian Goods necessary for the trade of Michilimakinac. Since when your favor of the 15 th Nov. has come to hand.

Although the journey by land on this side of Lake Erie to Detroit, has always been deemed a perilous undertaking, and 349 is at this moment peculiarly so, from the removal of the few scattering inhabitants, as a space of nearly Two Hundred miles (in which there are several unfordable streams) has thereby been left destitute of even one solitary Cabin to shelter the Traveler or furnish a bite of fodder for his famished Horse. Yet these difficulties I would not have considered insurmountable had the object in view required incountering them, and warranted my incurring the expense incident to such an enterprize.

No person has gone from hence to Detroit since my arrival, and as the British are said to have abandoned Burlington Heights, look on my departure as at hand, and all hope to see Mr. Ten Eyck in all this month.

According to your request, I have relinquished all idea of going to St. Louis, and to insure my being early at Mackinac and St. Joseph, I purpose going in the Fleet which transports the Troops destined for the reduction of those places, and shall exert myself to the utmost in bringing to a happy termination every part of the business with which you have intrusted me.

I am sorry to hear of the difficulties in obtaining Goods as it is far from certain that Montreal will be in possession of our armies this winter, but as I said in my last, I think enough to answer the present exigence may be got in New York and Philadelphia.

If the success of your application to import, depends in the least on the Indians Supplicating the Government for supplies, I must acknowledge my apprehensions of the result for unfortunately these savages entertain ideas bordering on Conviction that their Father is like any other Trader who will find it his interest to furnish them with Merchandize

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as heretofore by the factories. An illusion which will never loose the force of a reality, until the United States totally abandon that species of monopoly, and I trust that before long the gentlemen who vote appropriations to carry on a traffic of no real benefit to our tawny neighbors, and bemeaning to the Government, will discover how fallacious were their expectations when by such Establishments they promised themselves the Philanthropic satisfaction 350 of Meliorating the condition of the Indians and attaching them unalterably to the United States. Since it is a fact notorious to all the world that those very Tribes who experienced in the greatest degree this fostering care of the Executive were the first to raise the Tomahawk against the American Settlements. in short as the Officer who concluded the late Armistice with the Hostile nations at Detroit, assured them that on applying at Fort Wayne Ammunition & c . would be issued according to their wants.<sup>92</sup> I see no reason why they should be when their necessities are thus gratuitously relieved without intercession. I shall be glad of the letter to Gen I . Cass and if another can be obtained for Captain Elliot of the Navy,<sup>93</sup> I am confident they will be of great use to Dear Sir Your most ob servt

<sup>92</sup> Before General Harrison left Sandwich, in pursuit of Proctor's troops, he was sought by chiefs of the Chippewa and the Ottawa, who asked for peace. He referred them to Ger. Duncan McArthur, left in command at Detroit, who concluded a temporary armistice. This was on his return, renewed by Harrison, who wrote to the secretary of war (letter in the Draper MSS., vol. 4X) that he was obliged to promise the hostile tribes occasional supplies of provisions in order to prevent their preying upon the inhabitants and thereby inciting fresh hostilities.— Ed.

<sup>93</sup> Gen. Lewis Cass was appointed by Harrison as civil and military governor of Michigan Territory, and left in charge at Detroit. Lieut. Jesse D. Elliott (1785–1845) was second in command of Perry's fleet. He rendered efficient service on the lakes, capturing two British vessels (Oct. 8, 1812) and aiding in the assembling of the Lake Erie fleet. After the victory

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of 1813 Congress voted him a gold medal, and assigned him to the command of an ocean sloop-of-war.— Ed.

Ramsay Crooks

*John Jacob Astor Esq. New York*

### **1814: RUMOR OF PEACE**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 2B47. Translated from the French.]

Michilimakinac the 29 March, 1814

*Mr. Louis Grignon*

My dear Friend —I welcome the reception of your letter dated the 1 st instant, which came to me the 25th, the courier 351 was delayed to await the mail from York which arrived here day before yesterday, and brought Favorable News.

It appears that we are to have a General peace, so that America will be drawn into it. Bonaparte has lost already 150 thousand men, and according to the address which he made to his ministers in France he admits that he is no longer Capable of Sustaining the War, that he has too much misfortune, and Mr. Madison seeing Bonaparte falter and tremble in his boots has regret for having declared War and has Cut it short as you will see by the Gazettes sent by Mr. Dickson.

I received a letter from Mr. Forrest dated 27 January that gives me this information. There is no Merchandise at Montreal for the Comp y Pothier comes up merely to regulate the formal business of the Co. He tells me that a Mr. Crawford sends up a little merchandize that he bought for ready money at Montreal, and which is very badly assorted, and

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probably that Mr. Rousseau<sup>94</sup> will bring some up, and that he thinks merchandise will sell here at 150 pr Cent.

<sup>94</sup> Jean Baptiste Rousseau was in the Indian department at St. Josephs as early as 1808. He was probably the father of Jean Baptiste and Charles Rousseau, employees of Hudson's Bay Company, who removed from Drummond Island and settled at Penetanguishene.— Ed.

It seems likewise that troops to the number of 300 men are coming to this post with nine officers, a Major, and one Doctor with 40 Boatloads of provisions.<sup>95</sup> Mr. Crawford was at York to see that all was in order for Spring.

<sup>95</sup> This reinforcement was under the command of Lieut-Col. Robert McDouall. For the orders of Sir George Prevost in relation to this re-inforcement, see *Mich. Pion. and Hist. Colls.*, xxv, pp. 573, 575, 578, 583. McDouall arrived at Mackinac May 18th, after nineteen days on Lake Huron.— Ed.

He did not speak of the value of Peltries, it appears however that it is not large, nevertheless, it is to be hoped that they will become more valuable some future day.

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If you have any provisions I advise you as a friend to try and sell them to Mr. Dickson always on the condition that he will take them and that his money is good.

Not having anything more particular to communicate than that I wish you all possible prosperity Believe that I am thy sincere friend and Serv t

Fred k Oliva

If you come here this spring I shall have a House for you, fanfan<sup>96</sup> and Augustin. Keep well. I expect constantly to obtain the canoe of merchandise that I sent to Montreal for.

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96 Fanfan was the nickname for Pierre Antoine Grignon. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii, p. 242.  
— Ed.

Addressed: Lieut. Louis Grignon La Bay.

[Transcript in Burton Library, Detroit. Letter Book of Ramsay Crooks.]

Pittsburg 17 th April 1814

Dear Sir —On the 10 th . and 14 th . Instant, I had the pleasure of addressing you, and have now to reply to your favors of the 5 th . and 9 th . of this month recently come to hand.

It affords me real satisfaction to learn that our industry and enterprise are no longer to be cramped and that goods will next spring be procured for the Indian trade

The memorandum I formerly sent you, I shall reexamine; for as it was submitted under the impression of its being intended only as a temporary supply to be extracted from sources by no means abundant: I think it may be somewhat imperfect, so I shall revise and transmit it in a short time should my alterations be found necessary.

In the event of Peace or the conquest of the upper Country putting us in possession of the trade of Mackinac, we will for at least the first year, be compelled to content ourselves with the boatmen already engaged in the trade and what few can be 353 had in the Detroit Strait to carry on the business East of the Mississippi, and on that River above the Prairie du Chien: and for that portion comprising the Saaks, the Winnebagoes of Rock River and the Missouri Tribes, I am almost certain a sufficient number are to be found in and about St. Louis.

Your obtaining a vessel to proceed to Mackinac on the promulgation of the Armistice will be an object of primary importance, for even should the Commanding Officer of that Post,

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now allow your property to be transported to the United States, it can hardly be supposed he will prevent its being sent to Montreal, and without a vessel specially appointed for the service. I am apprehensive no opportunity of visiting Michilimackinac will offer, untill the season is so far advanced as to render the completion of your business (in time) very uncertain. Besides if the Vessel is not permitted to return with a Cargo, she will be usefull in conveying from Detroit whatever Furs may be obtained in that quarter.

As you last fall confided to me the transacting of all your private affairs at Mackinac, I am a good deal surprised to find you intend sending out a special agent for that purpose. Believe me had I ever thought the addition of your business could have made the undertaking so very complex and of such magnitude as not to be completely within the powers of even my circumscribed abilities, I would without hesitation or reluctance have declined the proffered honor, but confident as I am of not having undertaken more than I can execute I must feel agrieved in the step you are about to take until I am convinced your concerns are far more extensive and intricated than I apprehended them to be, or that my incompetency is demonstrated beyond all possibility of doubt.

The offer came spontaneously of yourself and I cannot consider it fair, thus to withdraw your confidence in so important a branch of the enterprise without assigning the most cogent reasons for so doing.

If you do send an agent, I suppose he will bring the order for the vessel so it will be best for him to come to Erie, where the requisition must necessarily be presented to the Commadore. 23

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I feel particularly greatful for your permission to draw for the amount I owe Mr. Philipson but shall not avail myself of it unless I am ultametly obliged to visit St. Louis

Without loss of time I shall proceed to the Lake, where, if I find not any immediate conveyance, I will wait a few days in hopes trusting the order for the vessell will there

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overtake me, and in expectation of hearing from you very soon, I remain Dear Sir  
Respectfully Your most ob. Servant.

Rams y Crooks

P. S. Continue to address my letters to the Care of Mr. Wilt

[MS. in Library of Congress. McArthur Papers. An order signed by George Prevost.]

All Officers or others commanding or employ'd in His Majestys Troops Vessels or boats or in the Indian Department on the shores or in the Waters of Lake Erie or of Lake Huron are hereby enjoined and directed to allow the Vessel bearing the Flag of Truce and proceeding upon the Voyage and for the account within mention'd and on board of which this passport shall be found to pass free from all molestation and annoyance to Isle du bols blanc in the Vicinity of Michilimackinac in Lake Huron where she is to come to Anchor and be immediately reported to the commanding Officer of that Post she will afterwards receive on board from such place as the said commanding Officer shall appoint the skins and furs within mention'd of which Mr Touissant Pothier the Agent of the within named John Jacob Astor at Michimackinac or the Agent of Messrs McTavish McGilivray and Compy or Forsyth Richardson and Compy at that place shall furnish a correct list under his signature to the said commanding Officer a copy of which list is to be given to the Officer having the charge of said flag of Truce and with which cargo the said flag of Truce is to be permitted to pass unmolested from Lake Huron to Black rock or Buffalo as 355 shall be designated by the Passport to be furnished for that purpose by the Officer commanding at Michilimackinac<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> In the spring of 1814 Astor went to Washington, where he obtained permission for a private vessel to proceed to Mackinac to bring away the goods of the South West Company that were there stored, which were in part the property of British subjects. He then sent his brother, George Astor, to Montreal, to obtain a permit from the British authorities, of which this document shows the result. After Ramsay Crooks reached Detroit



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on his return from the unsuccessful voyage to Mackinac with the American fleet, he found that George Astor had arrived with the schooner "Union," on which they proceeded to Mackinac, and brought away the company's furs.— Ed.

Head Quarters Montreal 9 June 1814

George Prevost 98 Com r of the Forces

98 Sir George Prevost (1767–1816) was the son of a Swiss officer in the British army. He himself early adopted the profession of arms, and won distinction in the West Indies, whereupon he was in 1805 created baronet. As lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia (1808–11), he served acceptably, and was promoted to the chief command in Canada, in which post he served throughout the war.— Ed.

By his Excellencys Command

Noah Freer , Mil'y Secretary.

### **1814: NORTH WEST COMPANY EQUIP GREEN BAY TRADER**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 2B61. Translated from the French.]

Sault Ste Marie 14 July 1814

My dear Sir —An opportunity offering for La Baie at the moment of my arrival at Michilimackinac. I wrote you a few hasty lines sending you at the same time by Mr. Ducharme the family letters entrusted to me with two small packages

Having finished my business at Michilimackinac. I came here to do likewise after which I propose to continue my route to Montreal.

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Mr. Barthelot offered me your Peltries which I bought. I 356 hope you will believe that I gave you the highest price consistant with the present situation, therefore I am persuaded you will be satisfied therewith.

I believe that the expedition that you have Joined for the Prairie<sup>99</sup> will succeed without the necessity of fighting, it seems to me that the number of Savages ought to be sufficient to Chase the enemy or at least divide them and make them yield.

<sup>99</sup> Referring to the expedition headed by Capt. William McKay for the capture of the American fort at Prairie du Chien. Porlier did not go in person, but his son Joseph Jacques was a lieutenant in this campaign. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix. xi, xii, *passim*.— Ed.

The determination that you have taken regarding Merchandise was prudent, but at the same time I should like to discuss the outlook for the future with you. The general Peace in Europe will change the entire face of affairs in this Country and from my point of view Commerce will have advantage therefrom for some time.

As soon as there is the least Security against Enemies in this Countrey it is the intention of the Houses of M c Tavish & Co. & of Forsyth & Co. to unite to Equip at M c Kinac such persons as deserve their confidence, you may be assured that I shall interest myself upon your behalf.

I believe that you were informed last year that I propose to discontinue Commerce in this Country; although I am still of that purpose I hope that I shall have the satisfaction of news from you, and believe that I am very glad to be of use to you and continue your friendship. I remain with sentiments of sincere attachment Your friend & Servant

T. Pothier .

*Jacques Porlier Esquire*

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Endorsed by Porlier: Letter of Ts t Pothier Esq. announcing the 2 Houses of the N West for equipment after the peace 1814.

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[Source, same as preceding document, but 2A83. Translated from the French.]

*Statement of Peltries of Mr. Jac Porlier Sold by the Undersigned to Mons. Pothier*

1814 July 4 838 Cats 50 2095 47 Otters 22 1034 77 Mink 50 192.10 5 red foxes 2 10 6  
lynx [pichou] 2 12 29 bear cubs 5 145 18 bear skins 24 432 5 " 15 75 1670 muskrats 30  
2505 104½ Liv. Beaver 20 2092 29 fishers 6 174 123 martens 4 492 2 lynx [loup cervier] 3  
6 1 virgin fox 2 2 74 Deer Skins 5 370 Livres 9634 66 Little muskrats unsold

Berthelot

Endorsed [MS. marred] with a sale of peltries on the back, July 11, 1814.

### 1814: AMERICAN EXPEDITION ON LAKE HURON

[Source, same as preceding document, but 1C11.]

Lake Huron 7 Agust 1814

My dear John —I arrived near the Entrance of Lake huron on the fourth of this month on my way to Mackinac where I was in great hopes of meeting with all my friends once more. But found an Express arrived there from the Sault Ste maries warning all the Canoes not to proceed [to Mac] kinac as the expedition of the Americans [MS. torn] communication with the lland but to proceed to [MS. torn]. I came withe M r 358 Lamothe1 in one of his light Canoes two days march in lake huron to try if we could get further Information but getting none we thought proper to return I Shall wait in the french river 4 or 5 days & then Shall proceed to Machedach & try & dispose of my goods at yorck. I should have made a good profit on them if I had got Safe to Mackinac as I have an excellent asortment a mounting to 1327 lb H. Cr. I shall be obliged to make a Sacrifice of them at york but what

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can I do what greaves me the most is that I am prevented from Seeing you & my other friends M r Aird & anderson & all those that I have ben so many years living in friendship with in that country. I Shall remain at york till late in the fall in hopes of being able to get in to Mackinac with my old friends if it does not fall and if in case that it unfortunately Should fall in the americans hands I shall be obliged much against my will to go Back to montreall.

1 A distant relative of the person noted in *Id.*, xviii, p. 442; probably Joseph Maurice Lamotte, a well-known Montreal merchant.— Ed.

This canoe that I am bringing up is in company with M r P. I. Lacroix<sup>2</sup> but I intended to dispose of his half to M r Aird & Anderson which would have answered them very well & the other half would have served for the retail at Mackinac or la Bay as you would have thought proper. I had allso made a purchase [MS. torn] that is allready at Mackinac [MS. torn] hands belonging to a M r [MS. torn] which I Should have made out verry well with & I think I Should have mad Verry handsome profits this year if I could have got in to Mackinac & at the Same time bin of Some Service to my friends. I was not liable for that Canoe loade untill I receaved the goods & have a letter to M r Askin mention g the business but as I cannot get in to Mackinac of course I cannot receive the goods. when I met M r Pothier he told me he had 500 or 700 £ in his hands he did not recollect which & he told me that you or me Could draw on him for that amount but not for more now as you have had the Settlement of all this Business I shall not draw on

2 Pierre Ignace Lacroix, of a Montreal family related to the Porliers and Malhiots.— Ed.

359 him for one Farthing but shall leave it all to you. I owe to M r G. Plot of montreal 260 £ H. Cr. which he was good Enough to lend me to enable me to get this half Canoe of goods & which I never would have bin able to have procured without his generous assistance. Therefore I must beg of you to draw on M r Pothey in my Favor for that amount so that I may be able to return him his money by the 1 s of October which I Fairly promised him & you will allso draw on M r Pothey for the remainder of the money that you have deposited in his hands in my Favor [MS. torn] to live in Montreal [MS. torn] John I shall not make any

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Bad [MS. torn] you may See by my not owing more than 260 £ [MS. torn] half canoe Load I was bringing you I hope you have paid M r Crofford & dupuy I had not time to Informe myself of M r Pothey as I onely Saw him but a few minutes in passing If Anderson Insists in getting his money you will draw on M r Pothey for it M r Forrest will let you know the amount as it was to him I paid the different moneys for Anderson I beleve it is a little Better than one hundred pounds that is coming to him But Anderson would oblige me much if he would leave it with me for I Shall be in much want if I am obliged to return to Montreal I Should bring him up goods for it next year if we can get to mackinac O I am in a most wretched & deplorable Sittuation at Present in not being able to get to you at Mackinac I will remain at York & machedach till the last Season & if an opportunity Should offer I will certainly Try & get to you. I cannot Bear the Idea of being so long a time from you & my other friends I did not pass a pleasant winter, far from it in montreal. I beg my Dear John you will assist me as much as you possibly can as I shall be in great distress you can [MS. torn] favor of me for your pay that [MS. torn] in want of it yourself. [MS. tern] for you a number of small articles [MS. torn] have pleased you much I got 30 £ for your share of the prise money at Mackinac

Do not, fail to write me by the first opportunity to york or Machedash or if an opportunity offer very soon for the French River as I Shall remain there Some time in hopes of getting 360 news from Mackinac & if good news I shall risk all for all & try & get in to Mackinac

Do not forget to send me a draft on M r Pothey for all the money that you have left in his hands as I have that Debt to pay to M r Plot which I would not fail of doing on any a/c & I assure you I Shall be much in want for my Self Adeu my Dear John & belive me your Affectionate unckle

J. Franks

O how I regret my not being able to get to you affter a long Tedious voiage of 31 Day & every day rain exceting 4 Days Remember me kindly to M r Dickson, M r Aird & Anderson

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[Source, same as preceding document, but 2A101.]

Michilimackinac 22 Augt. 1814.

*Mess rs . Aird & Lawe Bought of Jacob Franks.*

One Canoe-load of merchandize marked F. L. now in La Rondes Bay—they incurring all Risks of damage, charges &c. in bringing them here—reserving the canoe 1 kettle, 1 Sail, 1 axe, 1 oil cloth and one Towing Line for £1500.

H. Curr y £1500.

N. B. Should the Property fall into the hands of the Americans before its arrival at this place, then Mess rs . Aird & Lawe are only to pay the original amount of the Montreal Invoice of these Goods.

J. Franks .

Received Michilimackinac 5th Oct of Mess rs Aird & Lawe the above amount in full

J. Franks .

Endorsed: Aird & Lawe £1500 Makana 22 d Aug t . 1814.

[Transcript in Burton Library, Detroit. Letter Book of Ramsay Crooks.]

Detroit 21 st . Augt. 1814.

Dear Sir —Having but a few moments notice to repair on board, on the 3rd. of July, I was constrained barely to advise 361 you of my drawing on you that day for Two Hundred Dollars in favor of Mr. Ten Eyck, at ten days sight which by the annexed statement of my finances, you will perceive was an act of absolute necessity.

## Library of Congress

On entering Lake Huron we shaped our course for Machedash, but this part of the navigation being imperfectly known, the Commodore was after sometime spent in fruitless search of the Bay induced to steer for St. Josephs, there the Schooner Mink, belonging to the North West Company laden with Two Hundred and thirty Barrels of Flour for St. Mary's was captured and the Fort and Store Houses reduced to ashes.

A Company of Regulars and some Sailors were next dispatched to St. Mary's where the company's Store houses were burned. there fine Schooner Perservance destroyed and a quantity of dry goods sugar and spirits said to belong to a Mr. Johnson<sup>3</sup> taken and brought to the fleet.

<sup>3</sup> The raid against Sault Ste. Marie was headed by Maj. Arthur H. Holmes, who fell at the attack on Mackinac a few days later. The attack on the North West Company was in retaliation for the activity of its agents in arming and conducting its voyageurs against the American posts, and in inciting the Indians against the frontiers.

John Johnston was born in 1763 at Craignear, Giant's Gauseway, Ireland Coming to America in 1792 he at once entered the fur-trade, and was stationed at La Pointe du Chequamegon, where he took to wife the daughter of a prominent Chippewa chief. In 1794 Johnston established himself at Sault Ste. Marie on the southwest (American) side. There he had a large domestic establishment, a fine library for those days, and such of the products of civilization as might be obtained in that then far frontier post. His children were interesting and well-educated; one of the daughters married Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, another an English clergyman. Johnston had held an American commission as justice of the peace, and collector of the port. In the War of 1812–15, however, he sympathized with the British and was regarded by the Americans as a renegade. One son was in the British fleet, being wounded in the battle of Lake Erie. Johnston himself had gone at the head of a party of his own employes, to the number of 100, to the defense of Mackinac. In his absence his property was burned and his goods confiscated. After this raid he rebuilt his dwelling, and lived there until his death in 1828. He hospitably received General Cass and

his party in 1820, and the vigilance of Mrs. Johnston averted a hostile attack upon them by the Indians.— Ed.

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Off Mackinac we lay a considerable time and only saw a few Indians to skirmish with occasionally, till in the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> Instant the troops were landed on the west side of the Island, and at some distance from the beach, were vigorously attacked by Indians<sup>4</sup> and others in ambush, aided by four pieces of artillery planted on elevated spots—a charge made the enemy fall back, but he soon returned to the work of death which lasted until a number fell, when owing to the total impracticability of penetrating to the Fort through the woods and finding every position of any strength on the road in possession of the British it was judged most advisable to return to the Vessels, which was effected without opposition, and all the well and wounded were re-embarked before sunset.

<sup>4</sup> Tomah (for whom see *ante*, p. 346, note 88) was on this occasion the leader of the Indians.— Ed.

Understanding early on the 6<sup>th</sup> . that we were about to weigh anchor, and supposing thereby the expedition abandoned, I waited on the Commodore requesting permission to go ashore and ascertain whether the commandant of Mackinac would allow your property to be brought away, but was answered that from information obtained the day previous there was no doubt he would but as the future movements of the forces were not determined on, it was thought improper to suffer any communication with the Island. We soon after sailed again to St. Joseph's. anchored one night, and then came down to an Island about one hundred miles from Mackinac;<sup>5</sup> where Commodore Sinclair<sup>6</sup> delivered me a letter from Mr. Forrest agent for the

<sup>5</sup> One of the objects of the expedition, aside from the attempt to recover Mackinac, was to secure the furs of the North West Company's flotilla, then coming from Fort William on Lake Superior. In this, likewise, the expedition was a failure, for the flotilla, worth over



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\$1,000,000, managed to elude the Americans and enter French River in safety. See "Franchère's Narrative," in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, vi, pp. 393–397.— Ed.

6 Capt. Arthur Sinclair, of the United States navy, entered as a midshipman in 1798. In 1807 he was commissioned lieutenant, and in 1812 master commandant. On the outbreak of war he was in command of the "Argus." After Perry's retirement he was given command of the fleet on the upper lakes, and took charge of the unsuccessful expedition to Mackinac. In 1815 he was in command of the "Congress," and served actively until his death in 1831.— Ed.

British Landing, Mackinac Island From photograph, 1910

363 late South West Company (a copy of which is subjoined) telling me at same time that as the object of the enterprise could not be attained with the force on board, I was at liberty to visit Mackinac; and the Captain Dexter<sup>7</sup> who was going to Erie with the Lawrence, Caledonia, and Mink would grant the necessary passports at Detroit.

7 Daniel S. Dexter was appointed midshipman in the United States navy in 1800, lieutenant in 1807, and commander in 1814. He died in 1818.— Ed.

Here I arrived four days ago, and am happy to inform you that Mr. George Astor<sup>8</sup> entered the river yesterday with a vessel of about 90 tons, he chartered at Grand River 70 miles above Erie. I have not yet seen him, neither has he wrote me, but he certainly must be up the first fair wind.

8 George Peter Astor, the eldest brother of John Jacob Astor, was born in 1752 at Waldorf, Germany. Early in life he went to London, and became partner in the firm of Broadwood & Company, piano makers. He came to America during the War of 1812–15, and had a store on Water Street, New York, where he was engaged in the furtrade. He died in 1832. His name appears in the New York directories from 1816–32; and several

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real estate transfers are entered in his name. For this information the Editor is indebted to Mr. Wilberforce Eames of the Lenox branch, New York Public Library.— Ed.

I have your favor of 2<sup>nd</sup> . July from Washington and observe what you say of Racoons and Muskrat.

The season is now pretty far advanced, but with moderate luck we can get back from Mackinac before the weather becomes boisterous—to ensure which, you may rest satisfied not a moment will be lost.

For the Vessel I should suppose he has the necessary papers from the Naval Commandant on Lake Erie, but to make all sure in the event of his not arriving before Captain Dexter 364 leaves this, I will go down till I meet him. I am Dear Sir Your most ob  
Servant

Rams y Crooks

*John Jacob Astor Esq. New York*

### **1814: BRITISH CONTROL MACKINAC**

[MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library. Pressmark: Wisconsin MSS., 60B46.]

By Robert M c Douall Esq r Lieutenant Colonel of His Majestys Glengarry Light Infantry and Commandant of the Post of Michilimackinac and Dependencies, &c.9

9 For a brief sketch of Lieut.—Col. Robert McDouall of the British army (1796–1848), see *Wis. Hist. Colls*, ix, p. 193.— Ed.

Permission is hereby granted to Louis Beaupré<sup>10</sup> to depart from hence and winter at Green Bay and Dependencies with a Barge containing the Packages as specified on the other side and navigated by one Man they behaving as becometh

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10 Louis Beupré was a well-known Green Bay fur-trader and *habitant*. He is said to have been in the West as early as 1797, when he wintered with John Lawe near Fond du Lac. In 1798, Beupré began a farm on the east side of Fox River, that which was in later years known as “private claim No. 13;” see *Amer. State Papers, Public Lands*, iv, pp. 703, 858. In 1810–11 he entered on Lemonweir River, and in January of 1814 was with Dickson at Lake Winnebago. He is said to have assisted in 1814 at the defense of Mackinac. A person of his name (possibly his son) was employed in 1831 at the shot-tower at Helena. The elder Beupré is mentioned as a householder at Green Bay in the census of 1836, and died there in the summer of 1838.— Ed.

Given under my Hand and Seal at the Post of Michilimackinac October 19<sup>th</sup> . 1814

Rt McDouall Lt. Col. Commanding

[Seal]

Endorsed: Loading of the Barge: 3 Barrels Sugar 7 Bales Merchandize, 2 Kegs Powder 4 Ditto Rum 3 Ditto Merchandize, 4 Bags Shot & Ball 3 Cassettes Merchandize And the necessary Provisions &c.

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[Source, same as preceding document, but 1C16.]

[ Montreal , winter of 1814–15]11

11 This document is undated; but its contents show that it must have been written during the winter of 1814–15, probably late in the season.— Ed.

Col. M c Douall is appointed Superintendent of all the Indians to the westward & William M c Kay<sup>12</sup> is appointed Superintendant for Michilimackinac M r Dickson will I believe be confined to the Mississipy as Superintendent to the Indians their William M c Kay is

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I believe disposed to Serve me as much as lies in his power he has lent me 300£ Yk C. [York currency] through the hands of a nether person but do not mention this as he does not wish it to be nown. You cannot conceive the high price of Goods in montreal & I consider my Self verry happy & Succesfull in procuring the assortment I have got through the means of my friends here—goods will be verry

12 William McKay was one of three brothers who entered the North West Company, and traded in the upper country. His brother Alexander was killed on the “Tonquin” near Astoria. Donald was known as “Mad McKay,” because of his impetuous temper. William began trading in Wisconsin in 1793, on Menominee River; the following winter he passed at Green Bay, and then entered the far Northwest, wintering 1794–95 at Portage la Prairie. He was at the Grand Portage rendezvous in 1797 and 1798, and the next year was stationed on Lake Winnepeg. In 1804 he was a wintering partner of the North West Company. When the War of 1812–15 broke out, he joined the volunteers, and in 1813 was made major of the Michigan Fencibles. In 1814 he was selected to command the expedition to capture the american fort at Prairie du Chien—see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix, xi, xii, index. His regiment was disbanded at Mackinac in the summer of 1815, he receiving the appointment of Indian superintendent, first at Mackinac, later at Drummond Island. Thereafter McKay made his home at Montreal, coming up for the autumn months to transact business with the Indians. He married in Montreal a daughter of Judge Davidson, and his son Robert became a judge. William McKay continued his official duties until the removal of the post from Drummond Island in 1828. He died in 1832 of cholera, at Montreal. He was a tall, strong man, severe with his inferiors and the Indians, but Possessed of ability and integrity.— Ed.

366 high at Mackinac as they cost so very high here but they will not be so Scarce as last year as Michell la Croix<sup>13</sup> is going up with 6 Canoe loads M r Roch Blave<sup>14</sup> with 8 & Bailley<sup>15</sup> with 2 Boat loads by the way I am going M r Derivier is sending M r Barthelotte his goods by the grand River I hope I shall be

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13 Michel Lacroix was a Canadian of good education, who early in the nineteenth century, settled at Peoria. There he built a good house, and took for his wife Catharine Dubuque, a cousin of the famous Julien. In 1812, Lacroix went to Canada with a convoy of furs. During his absence war began, and in the raid of Captain Craig his house at Peoria was burned, and his family carried off to Cahokia. He thereupon joined the British army, and served as an officer. At the close of the war he returned with goods for trading, found his family, and settled with them at Cahokia. After Lacroix's death in 1821, his widow married Gov. John Reynolds of Illinois.— Ed.

14 Pierre Rastel, sieur de Rocheblave, was a son of Philippe Francois, British governor of Illinois, who was captured in 1778 by George Rogers Clark. In Wis. Hist. Colls., xviii, p. 214, note 70, it is stated that Pierre and Noël (noted *ibid.*, p. 462, note 84) were nephews of the elder Rocheblave. Recent information from family descendants proves that they were in truth his sons, of whom the elder—Noël, once partner of Jacques Porlier—died in Montreal in 1805. Pierre entered the fur-trade before the close of the eighteenth century, and was by 1801 a partner of the X Y Company, and in 1803 wintered in the Athabasca region. In 1804 he signed the agreement, by attorney, for the union of the two companies. Upon the re-assignment in 1805, Rocheblave took charge of the Assiniboine district, where he was met by Alexander Henry the younger. Rocheblave was prominent in the reorganized company, and from 1812–14 officered a voyageur company raised to protect the North West Company's property. In 1816 he retired from active wintering and acted as managing agent of the company, each summer going up to Fort William. He was active in opposition to Lord Selkirk and in 1817 secured the arrest of the latter. Feb. 9, 1819, Rocheblave married at Montreal Elmire Bouthillier. After the union of his company with the Hudson's Bay (1821), he devoted himself to public service, as member of the legislature and council, and as local magistrate. He died at Montreal in 1840. One of his daughters was living in 1908. See also his letters, *post.*— Ed.

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15 For a reference to Joseph Bailly, see *ante*, p. 110, note 49. When the American expedition visited Drummond Island in 1814, Bailly was one of three who were captured. He was taken to Detroit, and afterwards exchanged.— Ed.

367 able to dispose of a great part of my goods at Mackinac to enable me to fulfill my Engagements here, I mean sifter you & Aird has got your full Supplies I am pretty Confident their will be a great deal of goods wanted at Mack.

Their is no appearance of peace with the Americans as yet it appears that G[en.] Proctor intends to carry on the Ware Vigourously we are Building a 40 Gun Frigate in lake huron Say Machadach Bay. Their is Every appearance of our present governor S r George Provost being recalled & a new governor appointed for the Canadas it is Said that the people in england are verry much displeased with his conduct at Platsburgh & cry out much against it Their is an immense number of Troupes to be Sent out here earely in the Spring which will assist in making [up] all the loss of all the Merchants in Montreal I hope a few will benefit by it in our poor Quarter of the world. you must reserve as much provisions as will be necessary for the men to come with the Boats as fare as holland River & as much As will Support you at Mackinac untill I arrive you can get Beauprey & Chaque<sup>16</sup> to accompany M r Aird to meet me at holland River<sup>17</sup>

16 Stanislaus Chappu was known to have been a clerk, before 1800, at the Milwaukee post, where he seems to have remained until about 1805. By 1813 he was a clerk for John Lawe; and being at Mackinac in 1814, assisted in its defense. He likewise was at this post in 1816, when he acted as pilot to the American troops coming to build a fort at Green Bay. He remained in Lawe's employ for many years. In later life, his post was on the Menominee River, where he took up a farm, dying thereon about 1854. He was a typical trader, and in the documents given *post* much will be found of his activity.— Ed.

17 Franks was planning to come up via the Toronto portage, which was much used during the War of 1812–15. In 1793 Sir John Simcoe, governor of Upper Canada, made an

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excursion from Toronto (then Little York) northward along the route that he had laid out in subsequent years (1794–96). This road, thirty miles in length, was known as Yonge Street; its northern terminus was on Holland River, an affluent of Lake Simcoe. Holland River was explored in 1791 by Maj. S. Holland, surveyor-general of Upper Canada, and to it was given his name, upon a large manuscript map now in the crown land office of Ontario. There were two landings, a mile and a half apart—the upper being for canoes and vessels of light draft, the lower for larger craft. The government erected warehouses at this point, to be used in the transport to the naval station at Penetanguishene. At present there is a small village here, known as Holland Landing.— Ed.

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My Sister Becky is at York I saw her last fall as I passed their. M r Kemble is paymaster to the Incorporated Melissia of upper Canada. Try and make as much peltries as possible they will be of value I wish you could get parish grignon<sup>18</sup> to Buy his assortment from me next Summer as he will have a good deal of peltries as well as money & I Shall have a good deal more goods than you & James will want Make a long a/c with goverment & Supply them with all they may want in your Quarter & I hope James Aird will have a long a/c against goverment allso. I think it would be well to retain powell<sup>19</sup> in your employ next year but you are the best Judge of that do as you think proper

<sup>18</sup> Perische Grignon was a son of Pierre the elder, by a Winnebago mother. He was brought up with the Grignon family, and during the War of 1812–15 acted as interpreter, accompanying the Indian contingent that went to the siege of Fort Meigs. He had a homestead on the west side of Fox River, which in 1823 was confirmed to him by the federal land commissioners. Later he removed to the Fox-Wisconsin portage, where he married a daughter of a Winnebago chief. He was living at the portage as late as 1836.— Ed.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Powell was a well-known Wisconsin trader, who was a lieutenant in McKay's expedition against Prairie du Chien (1814), and was commended for courage and activity.

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He seems to have settled near Butte des Morts, whence in 1832 a letter (Wisconsin MSS., 3C132) was written by him to friends in Green Bay. He died in the latter part of the year 1837.— Ed.

I think it would be well for James to try & get Some one to winter in the yancton country as I Suppose Anderson will continue in goverment employ & an Equiptment with the Yanktons will answer well on account of the Beaver & Buffalo Robes. I am much affraid that Goverment will Take all the provisions belonging to Individuals a bout york as the person I contracted with made that reserve that if goverment Seized the provisions he would not be obliged to deliver them to me & of course I would [MS. torn] pay for them on my Arrivall here I went 369 to M rs M c Dougalls to Board but all the Beds were taken up & it was a difficult matter to find lodgings in montreal I am Boarding with the Miss Levys where I am very well off. I have Settled with La Croix but he made Some fus & Noise here about my Selling the goods to you & James & threatened to prosecute me about it but all is Settled Amicably now. I have rented a room in M r Platts Store to place nay goods in & am perry often at a loss<sup>20</sup>

20 The manuscript here ends abruptly, a portion being lost. It is in Franks's handwriting.— Ed.

[ Jacob Franks ]

### 1815: EFFECT OF PEACE

[Transcript in Burton Library, Detroit. Letter Book of Ramsay Crooks.]

New York 14. Feb. 1815

Dear Sir —You will have heard of the word of Peace this will not lessen the value of the Muskrat Skins. At sametime I wish that you could sell them all, and come on here, as I shall probably engage in the Indian Trade.



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I expect some goods in about two months, when you come, I hope you will bring M [1000] pounds of the Muskrat skins with you.

Ginseng ought to be here by first of May Value same as before, I expect now all the Bank Notes will be in value much the same so that you may take Philadelphia or Baltimore notes which I hope will facilitate the sales I am truly yours,

John Jacob Astor

[Source, same as preceding document.]

Brooklyn 21 st . March 1815

Dear Crooks —Long ere now you must have chalked me down in your *Black Buke* for a most ungrateful, lazy dog, but my dear fellow you must no longer remain under that surly impression, for be it known unto you, that almost ever since you last heard from me I have been *Campaigning* it between this and the *Canadian lines* , partly for myself and particularly 24 370 for an old *friend of ours* ; the result of this peregrination & c . you shall have at full length when we meet, which I hope you will accelerate as much as circumstances may permit. I am now in the full bustle of preparation for Albany, where business calls me for a few days, therefore have only time to give you the purport of a short tete-a-tete I had with the old Cock this morning, Viz—

That he is digesting a very extensive plan for establishing all the Indian Countries within the line of demarkation between G B. & the U. S. and the probability is that a considerable time may elapse before that object can be brought to full maturity, as he wants an exclusive grant or privelege & c . & c . he added that it would be a pity, we should in the meantime be altogether inactive, therefore as he expects a parcel of Indian goods out in the Spring it is his wish that ( *Lob Man* ) you and myself would come to some arrangement

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either to purchase the goods and try the S. W. on our own Acct, or take them to Mackinac and give him a certain share of the profits, (as might be agreed upon)

These are the general outlines, from which you can very easily draw your conclusions regarding his views, which I really believe are as friendly toward us all, as his own dear interest will permit, for of that you are no doubt aware, he will never loose sight *until some kind friend will put his or her fingers over his eyelids* .

If something like this plan would meet your ideas, it will give me much pleasure for on your judgement I can entirely rely, knowing you are perfectly conversant in every branch of that business, and there is no mortal living, I would prefer being concerned with, of this I have no doubt you are perfectly convinced. On your arrival at New York have the goodness to come to Brooklyn before you wait on the old man as I would *much like* to have the first *confab* with you. Fat M c Kenzie<sup>21</sup> is here for the third time since his arrival in the

<sup>21</sup> No doubt a reference to Donald McKenzie, who was a distant relative of Sir Alexander McKenzie, and brother of Roderick. He had been a clerk in the North West Company, and in 1809 joined the Astoria enterprise, proceeding overland from St. Louis to the Columbia. He returned in 1814, and later re-entered the North West Company. After the coalition of that concern with the Hudson's Bay Company, he served the latter corporation several years, acting as governor for the Red River colony. Retiring in 1833, he settled at Mayville, N. Y., where he died in 1851.— Ed.

<sup>371</sup> white man's country, he pesters the old Tyger's soul out to employ him again, but he dislikes him very much, sometimes says that if he enters into the business upon the meditated large scale that he should like to give him a situation in some retired corner where he could do no mischief & c . & c .

I am glad that he did not propose him as one of our party as I think it would break up the concern. Keep these affairs to yourself and hasten to meet your sincere friend

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Robert Stuart 22

22 The career of Robert Stuart was remarkable for adventure and vicissitude. Born in Scotland in 1784, he was educated at Paris. In 1806 he came to Montreal, where his uncle, David Stuart, was engaged in the fur-trade. Both uncle and nephew entered Astor's Pacific Fur Company, and in 1810 sailed for the Columbia in the "Tonquin." On that famous voyage he showed the resolution and resource that afterwards characterized his career. In July, 1812, Stuart was placed in charge of the overland party, of which Ramsay Crooks was a member; after severe hardships, it reached St. Louis the following April. After reaching New York, Stuart married, and the next year began operations in behalf of Astor, being in 1819 stationed as manager at Mackinac. There, Stuart was one of the chief personages of the island, and after 1829 was a member of the mission church. About 1833 he retired from active business, making his later home in Detroit, where he served as state treasurer (1840–41) and federal Indian agent (1841–45). He died in 1848, while visiting Chicago.— Ed.

All the good folks of this family desire me to rem. them very kindly to you—I no sooner told the old Lady that I expected you soon, that she began *to scour her little pot, and called for the supper to be got ready for her poor Scotchman* . I really think the old lady has some design upon you; and whether you are to become my father, brother or son-in-law, you will always find me yours truly

R. S.

N. B. Betsy is so glad at the near prospect of your coming amongst us, that if I did not depend much on my own *372 qualifications* I assure you, it staggers my faith not a little. Magee desires his best wishes to you, but is too devilish lazy to write, but promises to make up for it in *chat* when you meet.

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Addressed: Ramsy Crooks Esq. care of Messrs Brown McDonell & Co. Pittsburg  
Pennsylvania

Endorsed: Brooklin 21 th March 1815 Robert Stuart Recieved 17 April 1815 Answered 24  
April Ditto Rec'd 17 th , answered in part same day Do in full 24 th April

### **1815: LAST DAYS OF THE NORTH WESTERNERS**

[MS. in Burton Library, Detroit, vol. 457, p. 1.]

Montreal 9 th May 1815

My dear Old Friend —It is three days since I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 21 February, where could it have been so long on the road—I think before this we should have a regular post to your place, but you have been so long separated from us that your place is forgotten, however we are blessed with another peace, which I hope may continue, as long as I live, but we live in a time that such wonderfull things happen, that we cannot say what may come to pass. Boneparts return to France, will cause another General War in Europe, which I am afraid will extend to America, as they do not approve of the peace, I received a letter a few day ago from our old friend Todd, he was then at Bath taking the Mineral Waters, and says if his leg gets better he will return to this Country, as he has no friends in any other,—I expect he will come by New York. It is not only him whom old age deprives of friends. I must say that I experience every day the want of Old acquaintance. they are all Dead. there is only one alive in Montreal that was here when I came. I know but very few—what do you think of our Beaver Club which commenced in 1786 and consisted of 16 members—and I the 373 only one alive.<sup>23</sup> our late Friend M c Gill was the last, and a great loss he was to Montreal, he allways continued friendly to the last. and was much regreted, I was happy to hear he was so friendly to you, his sudden Death deprived him of doing more good to those who wanted it,<sup>24</sup> several who he mentioned to me shortly before his death—for he had no Idea of going off half an hour before he died.

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Mrs. M c Gill is left comfortable, but young Deriviere will it is said have £60,000. My dear friend are me never to meet in this world I think it would do you much good to Come down. Could I be spared from business I would go on purpose, to say we Meet once more, old Age should not prevent me having that pleasure, but necessity at my time of life obliges me to be attentive in procuring Neeessarys. Mrs. Henry & my Daughter Julia has enjoyed uncommon Health, I have only one Daughter & one son living one was kiled in the North West<sup>25</sup> the other died in the West Indeas, being a Midshipman

23 It has usually been supposed that the famous Beaver Club of Montreal was founded in 1785, and flourished until 1824—see Masson, *Bourgeois*, i, pp. 92–94—but Henry would appear to know. Probably he means that he is the last of the original members. The regimen and entertainments of the Beaver Club rendered it famous. No one could be admitted until he had served apprenticeship in the upper county. The motto of the club was “Fortitude in Distress,” and this was engraved on gold medals, some of which are still existing. The: meeting place was known as Beaver Hall, and during the winter fortnightly meetings were held. Here the difficulties and dangers of a fur-trader's life were recounted, the recital being the more graphic by contrast of wilderness conditions with the luxurious surroundings of the club house.— Ed.

24 The best-known of McGill's benefactions was the bequest which he made for an educational foundation. This consisted of £10,000 in money, and a valuable suburban estate. This institution had been planned some time before his death, and according to the terms of the will was to be established within ten years after his decease. Accordingly a charter was granted in 1821, but actual teaching was not begun until some years later. In 1852, McGill University of Montreal was reorganized, and is at present the most prosperous educational institution in Canada. Founder's Day is still celebrated each Year at the university.— Ed.

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25 Alexander Henry, second son of the writer, was murdered by a party of natives while at Fort Nelson, on the Liard River, in the Athabasca district. The son still living was William, for whom see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xviii, p. 505, note 41.— Ed.

374 shipman in the Navey we are subject to many misfortunes in the World—but our hope is that we will be more happy in the next. the great Ruler of the World orders all for the Best. we must depend on him and hope for our support in this life, and hope for his protection in the Next, where you & I may meet in those regions of Happiness in the Next. that period must soon come. it gives me great pleasure to hear you and Mrs Askin enjoy Health and that you have Escaped the ravages of War poor Mrs M c Kee<sup>26</sup> suffered much while she was here with her unfortunate Husband. he had no command over himself. continually deranged with Liquor, if he had lived, Goverment could have no relyance on him. I wish she was with you. I sent by Mr M c Intosh a Keg with some Tea Coffee & Sugar for you, and have never heard from him what he has done with it, I wish you would enquire of him as I suppose he sold it not suposing while the war continued to be able to convey it to you as the communication is now open I hope to hear from you frequently. with the most sincere wishes & prayers of me & Mine for you Mrs Askin & all yours—remain ever My dear Askin your old friend

26 For this person see *ante*, p. 272, note 89.— Ed.

Alexander Henry

N B enclose a News paper with all the News.

*John Askin Esquire Sandwich*